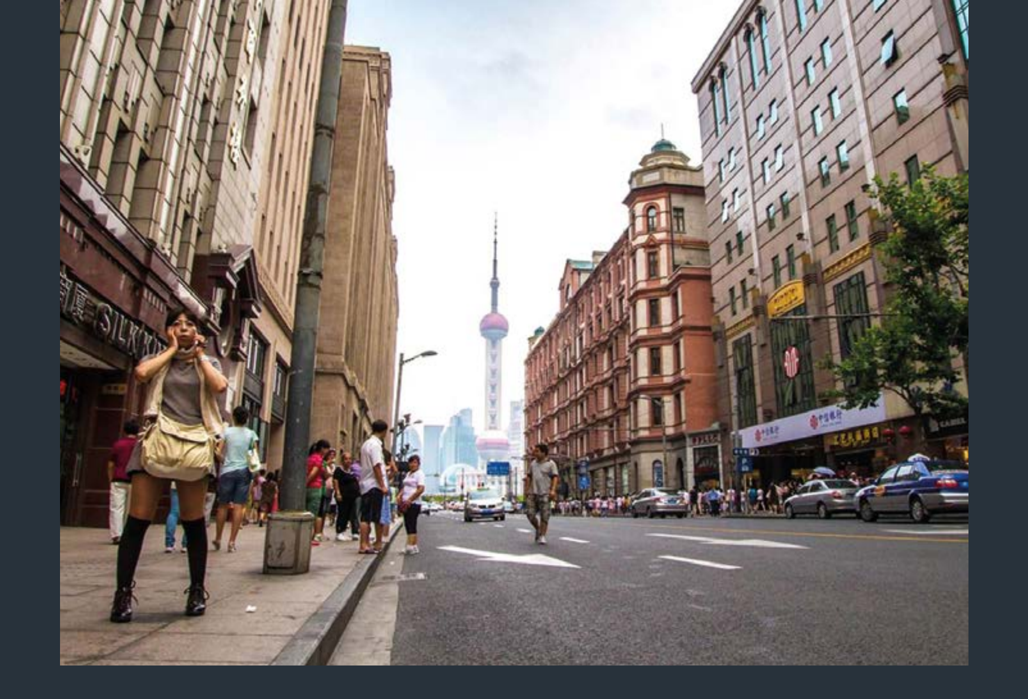


PASSING THROUGH SHANGHAI

Ethnographic Insights into the Mobile Lives of Expatriate Youths

Marie Sander



Passing Through Shanghai

Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality – 1

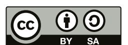
Passing Through Shanghai

Ethnographic Insights into the Mobile Lives of Expatriate Youths

Marie Sander



Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie. Detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.



The electronic, open access version of this work is permanently available on Heidelberg University Publishing's website: http://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de
doi: 10.17885/heiup.48.42

ISSN 2365-7987 (Print)
ISSN 2365-7995 (eISSN)

ISBN 978-3-946054-03-0 (Softcover)
ISBN 978-3-946054-04-7 (Hardcover)
ISBN 978-3-946054-05-4 (PDF)

This book is dedicated
to all families on the move.

ANTONIA, sixteen years old: *Die meisten Leute die hier herkommen*
mögen es erstmal überhaupt nicht.
Und dann mögen sie es.
Und dann wollen sie nicht mehr weg.
Und dann müssen sie weg.

Most people who come here at
first don't like it at all.
And then they like it.
And then they don't want to leave.
And then they have to leave.

Acknowledgements

There are many people I would like to thank for supporting my research on expatriate youths and for helping me to write this book. I want to acknowledge the academic and financial support of the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context: Shifting Asymmetries in Cultural Flows" at Heidelberg University, Germany, which helped me transform a dissertation idea into an academic endeavor. I am grateful for the debates I have had with many of the Cluster's members and the advice and critiques they gave me throughout the years. I especially want to thank my two advisors, Christiane Brosius and Barbara Mittler, for their guidance. I also want to thank all those who encouraged me to rework my dissertation into this book, the anonymous reviewer whose valuable comments helped to sharpen my arguments, and particularly Andrea Hacker, who guided me through the rewriting process. Thanks also go to Andrea's team, especially to Elizabeth Corrao, for her thorough language editing.

I could not have finished this book without my family—especially my wonderful parents, Traudel and Henning Sander, my partner Benjamin, and my friends—"my girls"—Annika, Franziska, and Tanja. To my friend in Shanghai, Yanni Shen, who never tired of explaining and translating, thank you.

I am very grateful for the crucial support of school principals and teachers who were interested in my research. The largest debt of all, however, is owed to all the students in Shanghai who, along with their families, shared their stories and time with me, and especially to those whose words, ideas, and actions appear in this ethnography and made it what I wanted it to be: a book that focuses on the voices and perspectives of the teenagers themselves. Thank you for letting me into your lives despite my having an agenda and for patiently waiting for the outcome of our joint endeavor.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Paul’s Experience Growing up on the Move: Combining Ethnographic and Transcultural Approaches in Expatriate Youth Research

It is Saturday afternoon and seventeen-year-old Paul is sitting opposite me at a café on Wulumuqi Road in downtown Shanghai. Below our window, buses, taxis, honking electric scooters, and pedestrians carrying umbrellas to shield off the sun pass by until they disappear into the narrow, sycamore-tree-lined streets of the former French concession. Inside, the air conditioning is humming and music is playing in the background, while Paul, who has been introduced to me as an “American student” by our common acquaintance Matthias, shares his story of growing up on the move. Paul is a German national, born in Brazil to a Brazilian mother and a German father. He grew up in Brazil and the United States and moved to Shanghai six years prior to the interview. Here, he is enrolled in one of Shanghai’s American schools. Learning that his father is German, like me, I wonder if we should switch to my native language for the interview. Noticing my general difficulty comprehending the many moves, places, tongues, and people that he references, Paul helps by clarifying his language skills:

PAUL: *I speak Portuguese, I don‘t speak German. My mom is Brazilian.*
INTERVIEWER: *Your mom is Brazilian, your dad is German, but you grew up in America?*
PAUL: *And China. And Brazil. But I speak very little German. I can understand it. Okay. But I can‘t speak it really. I can say like: hello, thank you, please. <L>.*[1]

As I listen to his account of the many moves and languages to which he has already been exposed at his young age, I begin to understand that Paul can hardly be sufficiently represented by the label “American student” that I had assigned to him before our encounter. His experiences include growing up on the move in a bi-national family. His and his parents’ nationalities, languages, and cultural practices differ both from those of his school and from his country of residence. Until recently, he never lived in Germany, the country that issued his passport, nor does he speak the language that it is written in. He has limited Chinese language skills and few contacts to

1 For an explanation of the interview transcript abbreviations used throughout this work, see Appendix A.

locals of his age because activities and friendships outside of Jinqiao,[2] or the expatriate "bubble" as he calls it, are rare.[3] His description of this "bubble" is reminiscent of the accounts by mobile professionals' transnational practices summarized by cultural and urban geographer David Ley:

> Foreshortened time and space create a circumscribed lifeworld around work, bars, and sporting and expatriate clubs. [...] The outcome is a lifeworld that is the opposite of the expansive and inclusive networks implied by ungrounded or deterritorialized networks. Instead, the social geography of the transnational elite may be highly localized, restricted to particular territories. As they are dispatched internationally from city to city, the transnational capitalist class are island hopping from one expatriate enclave to another (Ley 2004, 157).

Paul seems to have mastered this art of "island hopping," of finding a place in expatriate communities as a way of coping with growing up transnationally. He is not alone. As my own descriptions of the spatial practices of expatriate youths will demonstrate, this "island hopping" that Ley describes is a very location-based practice involving very concrete sites.

Paul's experience of mobility, shifting borders, and differences is one of the most extreme among the expatriate youths I encountered. His situation of living in China, being born in Brazil and speaking Portuguese at home, having lived and been educated in the United States, yet being German according to his passport are hard to grasp for me during our first encounter. Paul seems unsurprised by my confusion and by being labeled differently depending on his place of birth, country of upbringing, or passport. When we talk about his private, Christian, American school in Shanghai, for instance, he mentions that, including himself, only two Europeans are currently enrolled. Just hearing him label himself "European" in a perfect American accent, when he has never even lived in Europe, is surprising. Paul's particularly flexible way of positioning himself in terms of national or cultural identity clearly depends on his point of reference (schooling, passport, family ties) and seems to respond to different labels others appoint to him.

How do young people like Paul deal with a frequently changing environment and how do they manage such varied and shifting sources of cultural identity? This ethnographic study addresses this question by exploring the everyday lives of expatriate youths in general and Paul's and

---

2 Jinqiao is the district where Paul lives. It is located in the eastern suburbs of Shanghai and, with its Western food supermarkets, restaurants, and villa housing, seems to represent for Paul the physical manifestation of the expatriate community.

3 Fechter (2007a) also encountered the term "bubble"—among other metaphors, such as "bunker," "hothouse," "ghetto," and "Disneyland"—during ethnographic fieldwork among western expatriates in Jakarta, Indonesia, who used the term to describe their residential compounds.

his peers' own perspectives in particular. I am interested in foreign students' experiences of living abroad in Shanghai, their age-specific views on growing up on the move, and their notions of "home." Their stories raise important questions about our understanding of national or cultural identity and ways of belonging. Their experiences illustrate that common notions of either are often too limited to capture the cultural complexities in the lives of youths who have spent most of their childhood outside the country that issued their passports. Some of them, like Paul, were born into a bi-national marriage and, while living abroad, might wonder which of their parents' cultural frameworks seems most applicable, or has had the most influence on them. Others attend an international school that teaches in a language other than the one they speak at home or in the streets, which requires a significant linguistic flexibility. Still others have parents who have migrant backgrounds themselves. Their children's stories show that it is too simple to assume that, for instance, a child born to Chinese parents in France, who is "returning" to China and attending a French school, could simply feel "Chinese." Furthermore, someone who is fifteen and has moved five times across national borders might question if a current place of residence can actually still provide some form of belonging or cultural identity.

These scenarios show that Paul and his peers are, despite their youth, experts on the effects and challenges of migration. By studying their stories and everyday practices, I want to understand which competencies and strategies are important for young people moving globally. In short, this ethnography traces what it means to pass through Shanghai—to move to the city and leave it again within a few years—and to actively cope with the experiences that go along with it.

Increasingly, expatriate communities and international schools around the globe answer Paul's and his peers' questions about the effects of moving and negotiating cultural identity by referring to Pollock and Van Reken's ([1999] 2009) concept of "Third Culture Kids." The concept addresses one aspect of expatriate lives that my fieldwork and in-depth interviews with expatriate youths will also reveal: despite all its privileges and opportunities, growing up "on the move" and/or in a transient space demands that these children constantly cope with changes, loss, and questions of belonging and identity.

Is Paul a "Third Culture Kid?"
Ethnographic approaches to young expatriates' lives

Well-received and popular among—at least Anglophone—expatriate circles today, the concept of "Third Culture Kids" (TCKs) was originally introduced by John Useem and Ruth Hill Useem in the 1950s (see Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 20; Knörr 2005, 53; Richter 2011, 20). Studying American families living and working in India, the researchers described the parents' home culture as the first culture and the culture of the place of residence as the second culture. "The 'Third Culture' to them was the culture of the expatriate community, which they understood as a 'culture between cultures' integrating cultural features of home and host societies" (Knörr 2005, 53). Later, Ruth Van Reken and David Pollock's ([1999] 2009) book *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds* helped the concept gain immense popularity. Their work sets out to be a self-help book for members of expatriate communities and their ideas have been developed further in various (parental) guidebooks (see for instance Pascoe 2006; Pittman and Smit 2012), on special website forums dedicated to TCKs, as well as in the expatriate press circulating in Shanghai, such as *That's Shanghai* and *City Weekend*. The common definition of the term is as follows:

> A third culture kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 19).

The findings of these studies, guidebooks, magazines, and websites (with a focus on Western children) discuss how a life outside the parents' home country and particularly a lifestyle of constant moving affects children. TCKs are represented as a group sharing many qualities, despite growing up in different countries. Pollock and Van Reken ([1999] 2009, 39) argue that "for TCKs the moving back and forth from one culture to another happens before they have completed the critical developmental task of forming a sense of their own personal or cultural identity." This quote reveals the container-like, or as Homi Bhabha ([1996] 2012, 53) has put it, "absurd notion of an uncontaminated culture in a single country," that seems to occasionally underlie the reasoning behind the TCK concept. Based on such a notion of culture, Pollock and Van Reken see how the children's upbringing results in "the paradoxical nature of the TCK experience—the sense of being profoundly connected yet simultaneously disconnected with people and places around the world" (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 38). Problems associated with belonging and identity formation are presented as central for TCKs. These problems, Pollock and Van Reken

argue, are due to "an interplay of these factors—living in both a culturally changing and highly mobile world during the formative years" (ibid., 39). The general idea of development and identity formation underlying all these arguments—that adults possess a stable identity, while children are still developing and something of adults-in-the-making—has been criticized by many scholars on youth in other disciplines (see for instance Bucholtz 2002; Hirschfeld 2002).

Pollock and Van Reken, as well as authors following the TCK tradition like Robin Pascoe (2006), also see other specific, common challenges that many TCKs face, such as issues of relational patterns (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 131–143), "unresolved grief" (ibid., 165–182), "uneven maturity" and "delayed adolescence," or "delayed adolescent rebellion" (Pollock and Van Reken 150–158 and Pascoe, 25). They also describe the benefits of being a TCK, such as having an "expanded worldview" (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 79–80), and well-developed "cross-cultural skills" (ibid., 107–110), "observational skills" (ibid., 112–110), "social skills" (ibid., 112–114), and "linguistic skills" (ibid., 114–118). Concerning the relational patterns, the frequent experience of goodbyes, according to Pollock and Van Reken, can sometimes lead to "patterns of protecting themselves" (ibid., 131) and struggles with a "fear of intimacy because of the fear of loss" (ibid., 139). But the authors also describe how TCKs "will go to greater lengths than some people might consider normal to nurture relational ties with others" (ibid., 131). TCKs, according to them, place a high value on their relationships and often jump into "deeper levels of relationship" (ibid., 136). Unresolved grief is another issue that Pollock and Van Reken address, an issue that is related to losses expatriate children experience by moving. However, these losses are often hidden and unrecognized for a variety of reasons. The authors also attest that an "uneven maturity" troubles TCKs. Although their experience with TCKs often lead adults to view them as extremely mature—a maturity and comfort level with adults that most TCKs also perceive in themselves (ibid., 151), according to Pollock and Van Reken—few spaces are available for TCKs "to test rules during their teenage years" (ibid., 152). TCKs are therefore often unsure of which norms to rebel against. This uncertainty can lead to a postponed rebellion that usually manifests itself later, in college. The benefits of TCK life, including the expanded worldview and the well-developed skills mentioned above, are linked to the experience of differences and having to learn how to deal with them through observation and adaptation.

Although it appeared in 1999, Pollock and Van Reken's book is based on surveys that were conducted in the early and mid-1980s with adults aged twenty-two to twenty-seven, who were asked to reflect upon their childhood and the impact that moving had on their lives. These "kids," in other words, were mainly born in the 1960s. Processes of globalization and the spread and gaining influence of media and communication technologies have surely led to changes in the experience of growing up abroad

since then. More current results, based on an online survey,[4] are offered in the self-help book *Expat Teens Talk* (Pittman and Smit 2012). The book collects answers from parents, counselors, and other TCKs to questions the authors received from expat teens. Consequently, their approach only presents advice with very limited insight into expatriate youths' daily practices and social worlds.

Such everyday experiences, however, explain how children and teenagers cope with moving, and how they create world-views and ways of belonging within certain communities, cultural environments, or nations. Paul, for instance, excitedly talks about having met our common acquaintance Matthias during various nightlife activities and how he eventually started hanging out with him. They became friends, played music together, and founded a band which, however, no longer exists, due to difficulties they had arranging practice sessions (the students live one and a half hours apart by car or metro). It becomes clear, though, that nightlife practices, hobbies, and friendships significantly impact Paul's and his fellow expatriate teenagers' Shanghai experiences.

Ethnographic works on expatriates have attempted to capture such practices and to examine the daily lives of expatriates. They include research conducted in the 1970s, such as Dennison Nash's (1970) *A Community in Limbo* and research by Erik Cohen (1977). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, research into expatriates' everyday practices and forms of privileged migration became a strong field of study (among others: Beaverstock 2002; Willis, Yeoh, and Fakhri 2002; Willis and Yeoh 2002; Yeoh and Willis 2005; Fechter 2007b; Coles and Fechter 2008; Butcher 2009; Hindman 2009a; Hindman 2009b; Dobeneck 2010; Farrer 2010; Farrer 2011). Books such as Anne Coles and Anne-Meike Fechter's (2008) *Gender and Family Among Transnational Professionals* and *Going First Class? New Approaches to Privileged Travel and Movement* edited by Vered Amit (2007), exemplify this recent focus: they analyze everyday spaces outside the multinational companies where most expatriates work and also highlight the particular role of women, who are not themselves employed by the multinational companies, but accompany their spouses abroad. In the wake of these edited volumes, a range of articles has appeared, usually focusing on specific practices of privileged migrants.[5] In the context of this increase in

4 The average expat teen respondent, according to their data from 248 questionnaires, is fifteen years old, has lived in three countries, has attended four schools, and speaks two languages fluently. Based on the questionnaires, the authors also offer lists of issues expatriate teenagers have most questions about (top issue: "general worries/concerns/fears"), experimental behaviors they engage in (top behavior: "drinking alcohol"), and things they worry most about (top: "grades") (ibid., 175–176).

5 Geographer Georg Glasze (2006), for instance, brings the particularities of expatriate housing practices to the fore, describing the role of gated communities among expatriates in Saudi Arabia. Katie Walsh (2006a; 2006b; 2008; 2011) focuses on British expatriate identities in Dubai, examining cultural practices of domesticity, intimacy, and consequent articulations of belonging and national identity. Heather Hindman (2009a; 2009b) pays detailed attention to the meaning-laden

empirical works on expatriate communities, Fechter and Walsh (2010) discuss the necessity for further theoretical conceptualizations of expatriates, calling for an integration and inclusion of studies on mobile professionals into mainstream migration studies. They propose linking the subject theoretically with postcolonial theory, consequently integrating both topics. Integrating research on expatriates into migration studies, so the argument goes, is necessary to contest limited notions of migration processes and images of migrants. Although many of these qualitative research projects take ethnic, racial, and particularly gendered experiences of privileged migration into account, most neglect the age-specific experiences of children and adolescents. With the exception of Danau Tanu's (2011) work on an international school in Indonesia and Fiona Moore's (2008) contribution to Coles and Fechter's volume on gender and family (2008), which investigates the role of the German school for the German community in London, none of the publications have particularly focused on expatriate youth. Even Moore's contribution does not center on the children's point of view.

While these ethnographic works lack expatriate youths' own perspectives, TCK studies focus on that age group but lack contextualized, detailed ethnographic descriptions. All these guidebooks, Pollock and Van Reken's *Third Culture Kids,* Pascoe's *Raising Global Nomads* (2006), and Pittman and Smit's *Expat Teens Talk* (2012), are written from within the community and offer to help expatriate youths facing problems of belonging and identity by establishing a feeling of community. Based on

activity of shopping for expatriate women in Nepal and reveals that behind the shopping for art objects and an interest in cuisine lies the need for easily transferable elements in a world of constant movement. Food and art, unlike language skills and local friendships, "can be utilized as anecdotal parallels in future postings" (Hindman 2009a, 256). The collected objects at the next destination "act as means of transferring knowledge and status between locations" (Hindman 2009b, 676), helping the expatriate women to recreate themselves. Willis and Yeoh (2002; 2005) contribute a comparative angle, writing on British and Singaporean Expatriates in Hong Kong and China based on material from 247 interviews that were conducted between 1997 and 2001. They also provide insight into the gendered experiences of privileged migration, a perspective they pursue further in their article on single British migrants in China (Willis and Yeoh 2008).
James Farrer (2008; 2010; 2011) examines expatriates' nightlife activities, sexuality, and intermarriage and their relevance to encounters with the "local" in Shanghai. In addition to his emphasis on the interaction with "locals," Farrer also broadens the view on expatriates themselves by investigating foreigners in Shanghai who stay longer than five years. Foregrounding their narratives of emplacement, he questions the standard "equation of expatriates with highly mobile transnational elites" (2010, 15) and points out the increasing diversity of the expatriate community in social composition.
In addition to these writings with their particular foci, two complete ethnographies focusing on two distinct expatriate communities have appeared. Fechter's (2007b) *Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia* and Von Dobeneck's (2010) work *Mobile Eliten. Deutsche Entsandte und ihre Familien in São Paulo,* on German expatriates in São Paulo, both give detailed insights into expatriate communities' structures and everyday practices. Anne-Meike Fechter's work particularly concentrates on the boundaries present in expatriate life in Indonesia.

these publications, the concept of TCK was also used and promoted in Shanghai’s expatriate community centers and by school counselors. The author Ruth Van Reken had even given a talk at Paul’s school. It is this reinforcement of the sense of belonging to a special TCK, Global Nomad, or expat community that the guidebooks and the talks in Shanghai promote that raised my awareness of something I call “TCK nationalism.” This “TCK nationalism” offers a simplified form of belonging for what is otherwise a complex phenomenon and attracts individuals through its rhetoric, clear definitions of insiders and outsiders, and feelings of superiority.

Talking to Paul and other students, I find it difficult to see their flexible and reflexive ways of negotiating identity as claiming clear belonging “in relationship to others of similar background” (see Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 19). In other words, as simply being a TCK. During our first encounter, Paul seems to make very few claims of belonging at all. Home is a rather vague idea to him which he reluctantly refers to as “wherever I am staying.” When he describes his multi-local experiences, it is almost a non-attachment to places and people that comes to the fore. This adjustable idea of home also relates to his particularly flexible and ever-shifting way of positioning himself in terms of cultural identity depending on the point of reference. I argue that it is therefore clearly necessary to complicate and critically reinvestigate the TCK issue outside of the guidebook phenomenon to further understand Paul’s and other expatriate youths’ ways of situating and comprehending themselves in a world that is in constant flux.

While some academics (see Selmer and Lam 2004; Franke 2008; Grimshaw and Sears 2008; Greenholtz and Kim 2009; Peterson and Plamondon 2009; Walters and Auton-Cuff 2009; Richter 2011) have readily taken up the TCK category, Danau Tanu’s (2011) article, “Vignettes from Another Perspective: When Cultural Hierarchies Matter at an International School,” is one of the few ethnographic works that questions this approach. Tanu updates and complicates some of the dynamics described in the standard works on TCKs, criticizing former research for its limited perspective—mostly Western researchers conducting studies on Western participants—that is likely to overlook how “race, ethnicity, culture, finances and even the name of the country on our passport(s) impact upon our access to global mobility, ability to feel at home in different places, and the way others relate to us” (2011, 224). Having conducted ethnographic fieldwork at an international school in Indonesia, Tanu’s accounts show how cultural hierarchies are prominent not only outside, but also inside international schools.[6] Tanu’s study highlights an aspect of my own ethnographic work:

6 Tanu’s study reveals that different labels, such as “Indonesian” or “White”—that seem to be linked rather to a native English speaker status and mannerisms than to actual physical appearance (ibid., 230)—are prominent in everyday discussions at school. While for the school administrators “the ideal student is the ‘global citizen’,” many of the students with Asian backgrounds are seen as

that expatriate youth—although often forming a notion of "we"—are a heterogeneous group. This group, as Tanu demonstrates, has inner divisions and hierarchies:

> Money and cultural hierarchies influence perceptions and interactions that take place on the campus. Racial and other identity labels are sometimes used to signify status and cultural difference, but their meanings constantly shift. Various forms of social assets, such as language, accents, mannerisms, and money, are used to make and vie for status (Tanu 2011, 231).

Tanu explains how these hierarchies influence familial relationships and peer as well as student-teacher relations at the international school campus. International school culture, she claims, is often westernized. For students with Asian backgrounds "cultural dissonance" may arise between "'Western' culture by day and 'Asian' culture by night" (ibid., 223). Tanu finds that, in describing feelings of "cultural dissonance," previous analyses of TCKs only address repatriation or "life after the expatriate microcosm"—life after the "bubble," as student Paul phrased it. Observing these feelings (and, I would add, the need to creatively cope with the different cultural worlds at home and at school), Tanu witnesses "similar, though not identical" experiences of "Asian" TCKs and those "of second generation immigrants growing up in Western countries" (ibid., 223). These migrant groups have seldom been put in the same context. Anthropologist Jacqueline Knörr (2005) even criticizes the TCK concept for reinforcing this gap between "immigrants growing up in Western countries" and those treated as TCKs. While Tanu's work has revealed the heterogeneity of TCKs, urging for a more sensitive look at the divisions within the TCK community, Knörr (2005) takes her criticism of the TCK concept even further.

Knörr (2005, 54) notes that Pollock and Van Reken have broadened the definition of the term to include "all children who move into another society with their parents," thus making TCK too wide a term that no longer allows for distinguishing between "a Sierra Leonean refugee in the United States and an American son of an ambassador somewhere in Africa." Knörr, an anthropologist, takes a long overdue critical stance against the TCK concept and rightly points out that this broadening of the concept covers up ideologies connected with the TCK approach and remains associated primarily with "Western children brought up in the so-called Third World" and not to immigrant children in Europe or the USA (ibid.). She criticizes the concept of TCK as an ideology that implicitly reinforces qualify-

---

"add[ing] to the school's overall sense of visible diversity," while "fall[ing] short on being 'international'" (ibid.). Internationalism renders the dominant Western culture invisible, establishing hierarchies of who is or is not "international." In Tanu's words: "International schools may be a multicultural bubble, but it is a bubble that is not immune to the dynamics at work in the world outside the school gates" (ibid., 231).

ing distinctions between TCKs (Western Children) and other (im)migrants, as well as between TCKs and the population in the "home country." On this point, she argues:

> Whereas the upper class of young, mostly Western migrants to—mainly—Third World countries are likely to be considered "Third Culture Kids," producing creatively a culture for themselves, the lower classes of young migrants—those from Third World or poorer countries migrating or fleeing to mostly Western countries—are likely to be considered immigrants with a cultural background, which does not fit their new environment and thus produce problems for themselves and their host society. There is an implicit—and qualifying—distinction made between TCKs on the one hand and other young (im)migrants on the other. With regard to the former, (appropriate) cultural creativity is emphasized; with regard to the latter (inappropriate) cultural conservatism. Academic approaches thereby largely and mostly implicitly reflect the—usually not so implicit—qualifying distinctions made in society at large (Knörr 2005, 54).

Knörr succinctly points out the differences in everyday life, as well as in academic discourse, when it comes to the discussion of issues of cultural practices or cultural identities among privileged migrants—expatriate youths—and migrants coming to Western countries—immigrant youths. Whereas the "cultural background" of migrant youths in Germany, for example, is seen to cause problems, expatriate youths—TCKs—are associated with cultural creativity. While I acknowledge the "appropriate cultural creativity" of the TCK concept and how it might help expatriate youths to realize that they are not the only ones with such experiences—especially after a move "back home"—I nevertheless agree with Knörr's position.

One way to save this well-meaning concept of TCKs, which acknowledges creativity and offers support through creating a like-minded community from its "ideology of difference," is a radical extension of its use: the term TCK does not need to be reserved for qualifying Western expatriates alone. If the label were broadened to include all migrant youths, it could help acknowledge the full range of their creative practices and their universal potential to create "Third Cultures." When capturing immigrant youths' experiences in Europe or the USA for instance, I suggest linking the TCK concept to approaches in postcolonial studies, such as Homi Bhabha's ([1994] 2009) metaphor of the "Third Space" that describes a chaotic meeting space, "the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the inbetween space" (ibid., 56), where migrants discuss and create multiple new meanings and cultural affiliations. The TCK idea can help simplify or ground the cultural creativity that lies in such concepts as Bhabha's. However, as my own empirical focus on privileged migration is too specific to meaningfully contribute to such a broadening, and as the concept, in my view, still contains ideologies of difference in its usage, I refrain from using it in this study.

This rejection of the TCK concept does not mean that the—mostly implicit—ideologies of difference will remain hidden; on the contrary, depending on social status and origin, such differences clearly affect the migration experience. "Global migration is far easier for highly-skilled workers and those with capital than it is for those without training or resources," writes geographer Doreen Massey (1995, 197). But there are other terms more suitable to describe the phenomenon at hand. For instance, the term "privileged migrant" immediately addresses the inequalities that TCK obscures. By following the TCK concept I would a priori accept the children and youth under discussion as having "relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any" (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 19). I argue that, instead of choosing samples of self-defined TCKs as previous research has repeatedly done (Franke 2008; Richter 2011), it is important to look at practices of expatriate youth more generally—including everyday practices and identity performances that contradict such a definition. All these studies based on the a priori TCK definition only investigate youth (or mostly adults' reflections on their youth) that fit into the category, therefore automatically finding "homogeneity within heterogeneity" (Griese 2004; quoted in Richter 2011, 24). This might also be due to a methodological problem, because former studies, with the exception of Danau Tanu's (2011) work, have been built on interviews and surveys (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009), and have focused mainly on group discussions (Franke 2008) during which primarily adult "Third Culture Kids" were asked about their past. Other studies have been based on the anecdotal, fictional, and biographic literature of those concerned (Richter 2011, 18). I think that these adult retrospectives may often be linked to established narratives that attempt to make sense of the experience. I therefore follow an ethnographic practice that further distinguishes my study in Shanghai from former research focusing on TCKs. Instead of inquiring into adult retrospectives, I spent time among youths to understand their own points of view on expatriate life.

How does being young shape the expatriation experience? Toward an age-specific perspective on privileged migration

To further understand expatriate youths' own cultural positioning, it is necessary to consider their age-specific perspectives and to critically reflect on what the category "youth" means. Youth, children, adolescents, and their social worlds have been studied and conceptualized from various angles. Psychoanalytic and neo-psychoanalytic theorizations, for instance the works by Peter Blos and Erik Erikson, (Blos [1962] 1966; Blos 1970; Erikson 1968), usually inform studies that focus on the universal development of children from early childhood through adolescence (see Smetana 2010, 15–18). Such approaches to development are linked to debates about defining "adolescence," be it biologically based, "as the period encompassing the

onset of puberty and going until individuals are capable of sexual reproduction," or sociologically, as "the period when individuals begin training for adult work and family roles" (Smetana 2010, 11). Judith Smetana suggests following conventions of practitioners, defining ages eleven to thirteen as "early adolescence," ages fourteen to seventeen as "middle adolescence," and ages eighteen to twenty-one as "late adolescence" (ibid., 12). In the 1990s, however, with a combined focus on psychological and social development and influenced by anthropological studies, a more prominent discussion emerged that addressed diversity and, consequently, "the universal and relative features of adolescent development" (ibid., 26). This greater emphasis on diversity, according to Smetana (ibid.), converged with a shift towards a much greater consideration of the context of development.

The societal context of development has always been the focus of studies investigating youths' cultural practices. These approaches can mostly be traced back to the early to mid-twentieth century American sociological tradition of the Chicago School and the British tradition of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), which opened in 1964 in Birmingham. US sociologists focused on attempts to explain deviant activities. Interested in crime, drug consumption, and gang membership, they looked for collective normative behavior and moral codes specific to the groups studied (Hodkinson 2007, 3; Bucholtz 2002, 536). These scholars regarded youth as a difficult liminal phase and delinquent youths as victims and products of a deprived urban environment (Moser 2000, 17). While the Chicago School took a strong ethnographic approach, the Birmingham School favored the textual analysis of media and the semiotic analysis of cultural forms (Bucholtz 2002, 536). Although one of the most widely-read studies to come out of the CCCS was Paul Willis's (1990) ethnography of counter-school, working-class white boys, or "lads" (Bucholtz 2002, 536; Hodkinson 2007, 5), the British scholars specifically focused on subcultures based around distinctive music and style. Their "prevailing view was that such subcultures represented an enactment of stylistic resistance; a subversive reaction by young people to a contradictory situation in respect of both age and class" (Hodkinson 2007, 4). The Birmingham studies therefore understood working-class youth's practices as responses to the conflict between their class-based position in society and the "hegemonic values of capitalism and consumption" (ibid.). The scholars, and Dick Hebdige (1979) in particular, saw the subcultures under examination as "carving out distinctive semiotic spaces for themselves" (Bucholtz 2002, 537) and regarded the creative practice of assembling the distinctive styles to be symbolically relevant.

Both the Chicago School and the CCCS's approaches are criticized today for their tendency to "seek out distinctive or deviant minority groups and to place emphasis on collective systems of norms and boundaries rather than to detail the complex positioning and movement of different individuals in relation to these" (Hodkinson 2007, 7)—a critique that also applies to the

studies that create the fixed category of Third Culture Kids. A focus on collective deviance alone—or distinction towards the home and host society in the case of TCKs—precludes a thorough understanding of the complex practices, values, and identities associated with youth culture. Fragmentation, fluidity, consumerism, and media consumption have led to a rethinking of the term "subculture" in favor of more temporary cultural groupings with weaker ties and limited dedication.[7] Research on diaspora and the role of ethnicity in youth culture has contributed to a larger emphasis on the shifting and "hybrid" nature of youth culture and cultural identities; most influential in this regard is the work of Stuart Hall (1990; 1994; 1996; [1996] 2012). Furthermore, both the Birmingham and the Chicago schools left young women out of their subcultural analyses, as Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber ([1975] 1997) pointed out in the 1970s (Bucholtz 2002, 537; Hodkinson 2007, 7). Additionally, their focus on the attention seeking and deviant behavior of certain male youths excluded other everyday aspects of youth culture. Research on these less noteworthy activities, however, can help us better understand the multiplicities and fragmentation within youth culture, since these works dispute the clear dichotomy of subculture versus mainstream introduced by some variants of the Birmingham subcultural theory and set out to understand young people's lives more deeply (Hodkinson 2007). Such a research focus on the "mundane" has also been called for in the field of transnational migration studies (see for instance Conradson and Latham 2005, 228) and further supports the need to trace the everyday activities of expatriate youths in particular.

While the Birmingham and Chicago studies understood youth mainly as a social category, cultural sociologist Andy Bennett (2007, 34), referring to the cultural practices of young people today, observes that youth can be understood as "a discursive construct expressing an increasingly varied and, in many cases, conflicting range of political and aesthetic sensibilities." Contemporary cultural studies see the category of "youth," therefore, in contrast to definitions of "adolescence" in developmental frameworks, as a "discursive construct"—a perspective also found in popular discourse. Fuelled as it is by the marketing of products and practices designed to help older adults feel and look younger, today's media shows that definitions of what it means to be young are contested. Consequently, divisions in terms of leisure and lifestyle preferences and practices across the generations become increasingly less obvious (Bennett 2007, 35). Despite this fuzziness of the boundaries between youths and adults, Bennett supports the utility of the term by convincingly arguing that differences nevertheless remain. These differences manifest themselves "in terms of youth's economic marginalisation and legal dependency, and in the responses of

7 In response to this criticism, Hodkinson (2007, 8) stresses that detailed research has continued to show that some youths actually do develop strong attachments to "substantive and distinctive cultural groupings whose particular norms and values dominate their identity and life-style for a period of time."

the young and old to consumer goods and resultant patterns of taste and leisure" (ibid.). Furthermore, the "distinction between being culturally and physically young" (ibid., 34) is important because the physical difference generates distinctions in cultural practice.[8]

While sociology and cultural studies have moved from focusing on deviant behavior in youth studies to broader cultural practices and a discursive understanding of youths, anthropology, as Bucholtz (2002) points out, had established adolescence as an important theme early in the discipline's history from a perspective that emphasized the transition to adulthood. The classic ethnographies by Bronislaw Malinowski ([1929] 1968) and, particularly, by Margaret Mead ([1928] 1929; [1930] 1963; [1939] 1948), investigated the role of coming of age initiation ceremonies and marital traditions. However, these early anthropological studies, in contrast to the sociological and cultural studies approaches, did not investigate "youth as a cultural category." Rather, similar to developmental studies, they investigated "adolescence as a biological and psychological stage of human development" (Bucholtz 2002, 525). In other words, they considered youth to be a process, which is why anthropology's tradition of researching adolescence still focuses on change and development at the individual and cultural level. Its interest lies in "the social staging of adolescence in particular cultural contexts in which the universal developmental arc of adolescence is shaped by historically specific processes of social, political, and economic transformation, as well as by existing cultural practices" (ibid., 531). Bucholtz criticizes these approaches because they are dominated by the teleology of the developmental process from adolescence to adulthood. While she agrees that developmental issues are certainly part of the study of youth, Bucholtz reminds us that

> the lived experience of young people is not limited to the uneasy occupation of a developmental waystation en route to full-fledged cultural standing. It also involves its own distinctive identities and practices, which are neither rehearsals for the adult 'real thing' nor even necessarily oriented to adults at all (2002, 531–532).

Anthropologist and psychologist Lawrence Hirschfeld, investigating the marginalization of children in anthropological research, makes similar claims for even younger age groups. "By focusing on the adult end-state and adult influence on 'achieving' it, children's activities are cast as ancillary or subordinate. As a consequence, the contributions that children make to their own development are often obscured if not effaced" (Hirschfeld 2002, 614).

8 Bennett describes practices at clubs and concerts to exemplify this point, arguing that "the sheer levels of physical stamina they demand may ultimately present their own obstacles to participation in particular forms of 'youth' activity beyond a certain age" (ibid.) Clubbing is also a favored leisure activity for many expatriate youths in Shanghai, as Part IV, Chapter 2 describes in more detail.

Hirschfeld criticizes the underlying socialization theory that emphasizes how adults intervene in children's lives and teach them, noting that it allows researchers to overlook and underestimate the contributions children themselves make "to the acquisition of cultural sensibilities" (ibid., 614). Harkening back to Baudler's earlier criticism of the "adult bias" (1996, 146), German anthropologist Cordula Weißköppel (2001, 42) argues that academia's view of childhood and youth, and consequently its theorization of them, is based on perspectives of and definitions by adults. Likewise, Bennett (2007, 30) criticizes the construction of youth by "empowered 'outsiders'—journalists and other social observers with access to the 'official' and 'authenticating' channels of the media," emphasizing that youths' voices, which are crucial for understanding their lives, are starkly absent from these portrayals.

This unquestioning tendency to approach the subject from an adult perspective is linked to the constant comparison between the categories of adolescence and adulthood. Bucholtz (2002, 532) consequently argues for a conceptual shift from an anthropology of adolescence to an anthropology of youth, thereby rejecting the term adolescence because it always refers to an idea of "growth, transition, and incompleteness [...] while adult indicates both completion and completeness." In Bucholtz's view, the category of youth therefore understands age

> not as trajectory, but as identity, where identity is intended to invoke neither the familiar psychological formulation of adolescence as a prolonged "search for identity," nor the rigid and essentialized concept that has been the target of a great deal of recent critique. Rather, identity is agentive, flexible, and ever-changing—but no more for youth than for people of any age. Where the study of adolescence generally concentrates on how bodies and minds are shaped for adult futures, the study of youth emphasizes instead the here-and-now of young people's experience, the social and cultural practices through which they shape their worlds (Bucholtz 2002, 532).

By suggesting a shift in focus from adolescence to youth, Bucholtz (2002, 544) urges future scholars to "admit both the ideological reality of categories and the flexibility of identities" and to continue to draw on "theories of practice, activity, and performance to demonstrate how youth negotiate cultural identities in a variety of contexts, both material and semiotic, both leisure-based and at home, school, work, and in the political sphere."

My own ethnographic approach to expatriate youths in Shanghai follows Bucholtz's objective. I highlight Paul's and his fellow students' performances of cultural and youth identities by listening to their own accounts, while simultaneously capturing their everyday practices in various locations, such as school, urban street spaces, and night clubs. My underlying conceptual understanding of youth as practice, performance, and nego-

tiation is new for studies of expatriate youth because, until now, most approaches were based on the retrospectives of adult "TCKs." Similarly, in migration studies in general, children's perspectives are quite scarce. Knörr and Nunes (2005) acknowledge that recent approaches to research on childhood in the social and cultural sciences have started to consider children's own perspectives, thoughts, feelings, and views of their social world, but that this shift has had relatively little impact on migration studies regarding children:

> Little is known about children's particular understanding of (migrant) life, their concepts of their place of origin and their host society, their ways of building identity for themselves. This is true despite the fact that children make up a large proportion of migrants and despite the fact that children take on important roles in mediating between their world of origin and the host society (2005, 14–15).

Geographer Madeleine Dobson (2009), in her article "Unpacking children in migration research," explains the reasons for this lack of including children's perspectives in migration research. She argues that perceptions of children have long been based on ideas stemming from economic models because of the prominent focus on economic aspects of migration. According to these approaches, only adults are of economic significance; therefore children are seen as irrelevant and ultimately ignored. However, research on family migration and transnational families in particular has received increasing attention. Such research argues against the economic models by showing that children do in fact play a vital role in the migration process and contribute to its (economic) success (Dobson 2009, 356). Marjorie Orellana and her colleagues (2001, 588), for instance, argue that children are "an important reason why families move across national borders and sustain transnational ties." Children might sometimes even move without their families in order to gain valuable education that can consequently improve the socioeconomic status of the whole family (Orellana et al. 2001; Waters 2005).[9] Family migration research has thus been "vital in decentering a single 'lead' migrant" (Dobson 2009, 356).

However, despite recent efforts to include children in migration studies—"from silent belongings to visible anxieties and active agents, demanding attention in their own right" (Dobson 2009, 358)—few of these studies capture youths' perspectives on the experience of migration. Dobson (2009, 355) thus notes: "more could be done to foreground the perspectives of children in their own right."

---

9 This is, for example, the case for "parachute kids" migrating from South Korea to the USA. These children attend schools in the USA while their parents stay in South Korea. They not only work abroad "to advance their families' social and economic mobility," but even play the lead role in "a migration process that may eventually result in the chain migration of other family members" (Orellana et al. 2001, 581).

A study conducted by Deborah Sporton et al. (2006) on asylum seekers in Britain presents insights into the under-examined experiences of Somalian child refugees ages eleven to eighteen and their perspectives on the asylum-seeking process. The authors skillfully highlight the children's narratives of the self and the role that their mobility plays in this process. Their work delineates the different challenges posed by immigration policy, racism, social exclusion, and different age expectations. It further demonstrates how elements that may provide stable identity references, such as Muslim faith, are consequently of particular significance (Sporton, Valentine, and Nielsen 2006, 214). This impressive example of migration studies concerning children identifies how "dominant narratives of childhood" (and asylum seekers) are constructed and how children then position themselves within these powerful narratives by "actively negotiating and accomplishing their own identities in specific geographical sites" (ibid., 215).

Two other recent contributions to migration studies (Hatfield 2010; Hutchins 2011) focused on the experiences and perspectives of children in the dynamics of family migration. Both studies address the cases of British households, whose children's backgrounds resemble those of the youths I met in Shanghai.

Teresa Hutchins's (2011) study explores the experiences of families who have recently moved from the UK to Australia. Her ethnographic account privileges the perspective of the children in her study group, ages five to seventeen at the time of the interviews, and discusses the ways in which they experienced and made sense of the migration. Hutchins particularly analyzes the family's decision-making process prior to moving abroad and illustrates how different unspoken conceptions of childhood influence this process, as parents often argue for making decisions in their children's "best interest." As "individual members of the family often have different interests, […] family migration decision-making is based upon a process of negotiating individual influence and power within the family" (Hutchins 2011, 1233). While her article lays open the use of parental power in these negotiations and demonstrates how this power often results in the young actors' exclusion from the decision-making process, Hutchins also identifies ways in which children actively attempt to influence the decision or the overall migration process. Hutchins' findings prompted me to discuss the events and decisions that led to the move to Shanghai with Paul and his peers. Their perspectives describe a lack of their involvement in this decision. Drinking coffee on Wulumuqi Road, Paul tells me that he had not wanted to move to China initially because he had not "even googled it before" and thought it would be all "mud houses" and "bamboo forests." He remembers his father telling him about the move to China in a very straightforward way:

PAUL: *So he doesn't try to butter you up or anything. He ... If your dog dies, he won't make up an excuse. <L> He would just tell you he ran over the dog, you know. So he was kinda like: "Paul, we are moving to China." Oh.*

My work—in particular Part II, Chapter 1, which examines students' perspectives on the decision to move abroad in depth—shows that this lack of involvement in the decision, as in Paul's case, leads to or at least contributes to the youths' initial reluctance to relocate to China and that it renders the arrival more difficult for them.

Another study by Madeleine Hatfield (née Dobson) (2010) addresses the issue of return migration and presents, through innovative fieldwork on domestic spaces in Britain, the experiences of "children as equal movers." The actors of her study are between seven and seventeen years old. They are members of households headed by a highly skilled migrant and have returned "home" to Britain after living in Singapore. Her work explores how the children in her study understood and negotiated this return. Additionally, by drawing on photography by the children, she highlights the significance of their everyday routines and demonstrates children's specific home-making practices, which she often finds more "mobile, transient and smaller-scale" than those of adults. Based on Hatfield's insights, Part III, Chapter 2 of this work discusses expatriate students' home-making processes in Shanghai in more detail.

Inspired by these case studies and the recent shift in youth studies—from an emphasis on development to a focus on cultural practices and discursive understandings of youth—this ethnography investigates expatriate youths' everyday activities and focuses on their own narratives. By understanding age as a collective identity and not as a trajectory, I privilege the experiences of the "here-and-now" over the process of development. In order to capture these age-specific experiences, my work, despite its focus on the lifestyle that comes with a particular mobility, mainly addresses everyday routines at school, at leisure sites, or at home. The focus on the youths' own perspectives and experiences that informs my approach has led to many passages in this ethnography in which the students' experiences are described through their own words and testimonies. This framework means that I focus on the youth's relations with each other rather than their relations with adults. I am well aware that their relations to their parents and other adults might hereby be underrepresented. Nevertheless, I think overcoming the "adult bias" and understanding the youth's own perspectives will contribute to the larger picture of privileged migration.

My choice of terminology reflects the outlined developments in the study of youth and adapts them for the purposes of this book. I use the term "youth" or "youths," "young people," or the age-specific term "teenagers," and not the term "adolescent." The latter implies a narrow developmental framework, which I reject for my work. I acknowledge processes of

development, but regard transformation, change, and learning as something that is present not only in youths' lives, but for everyone. Because I worked with youths that were enrolled at Shanghai's numerous international schools, I also refer to my research participants as "students." Furthermore, I occasionally use the term "children," not in contrast to "adult," but in juxtaposition to "parents"—an understanding similar to Hatfield's (2010, 247). I have done so to underline the young people's dependency: at the time of my fieldwork, all of the actors of my study still lived with one or both parents. The term "expatriate," or its short form "expat," is suited for my work because the student interviewees at the international high schools in Shanghai all identified with it, regardless of their parents' occupations, nationalities, or migration trajectories. "Expat" can therefore be seen as a term that refers to a shared set of practices and privileges.[10]

One more conceptual dimension needs to be addressed. While "expatriate youth" is a suitable replacement of the TCK label for this particular study, it does not offer any insights as an analytical concept with which to investigate Paul's and other international students' mediations of cultural complexities. For this I have to turn towards the notion of transculturality and related ideas.

How can we understand the cultural entanglements of Paul's world? Transculturality as progress, practice, and perspective

There seems to be a common view that, in the broadest sense, "transculturation is the process of individuals and societies changing themselves by integrating diverse cultural life-ways into dynamic new ones" (Hoerder, Hébert, and Schmitt 2005, 13). Such notions disregard the fact that transculturality or transculturation is not a "given" concept but has its own conceptual history. Since the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch coined the term "transculturality" (Welsch 1999), a burgeoning field has developed into an interdisciplinary pursuit that scholars of various backgrounds have approached from a variety of angles.

Welsch (1999) developed the term "transculturality" to challenge the classical idea of singular cultures and more recent concepts of interculturality and multiculturality. He strongly criticizes these concepts and has argued that cultures are not "constituted in the form of islands or spheres" (1999, 197). The idea of transculturality, according to Welsch, can solve the misconception that cultures have "the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness" (ibid.). The concept of transculturality, Welsch argues,

10 Although "expat(riate) kids" are often mentioned as a subcategory of Third Culture Kids, along with "military brats" and "missionary kids" in the TCK literature (Richter 2011, 20), I use the term "expatriate youth" as an umbrella term that is broader than the conventional usage of TCK.

"sketches a different picture of the relation between cultures. Not one of isolation and of conflict, but one of entanglement, intermixing and commonness" (ibid.). Furthermore, Welsch also acknowledges transculturality not only on society's macro level, but also on the individual level: "Work on one's identity is becoming more and more work on the integration of components of differing cultural origin" (ibid.). Unfortunately, as cultural anthropologist Gertraud Koch (2008, 14) points out, Welsch's development of transculturation is rather generalizing and not based on specific examples.

Aoileann Ní Éigearteigh and Wolfgang Berg (2010b), in their collective volume *Exploring Transculturalism,* took up Welsch's (1999) idea of transculturality on the individual level and pursued a biographical approach by presenting texts "of a range of curious, open-minded protagonists who managed, through perseverance and affinity, to adapt to new, alien cultures" (Berg and Éigeartaigh 2010a, 11). In the introduction, the editors explain that the volume focuses on transnationally mobile persons. The aspect of cultural identity they pursue is based on the underlying premise that certain individuals "find ways to transcend their native cultures, in order to explore, examine and infiltrate new, seemingly alien cultures" and that these experiences show that "it will become increasingly difficult to identify and separate people according to previously accepted delineations" (ibid.). The chosen protagonists, from their point of view, are defined as "transcultural personalities […] because of their willingness to rise to the challenge of living in unfamiliar, sometimes even hostile, societies, and forge new, hybrid narratives of identity for themselves, without compromising their own individuality and cultural heritage" (Berg and Éigeartaigh 2010a, 16).

Éigearteigh and Berg term these individuals "transculturalists" and argue that looking closely at their experiences and narratives provides insights into "the conditions under which cultural change takes place" (Berg and Éigeartaigh 2010a, 11). The editors add a critical aspect to their overtly positive portrayal of transcultural experience in their introduction. They point out that Welsch's (1999) optimistic outlook on transculturality as a state that "can help the migrant to overcome feelings of isolation, dislocation and foreignness" (Berg and Éigeartaigh 2010a, 12, in reference to Welsch 1999) ought to be regarded with care, as "people who cross borders continue to struggle with unfamiliar social norms and behaviours" (ibid.).

In a similar way, Nina Richter (2011, 117) has suggested that transculturality offers an identity model through which TCKs can be understood. Her work combines the popular concept of TCKs with a theoretical interpretation of transculturality. Richter draws on Welsch's concept and understands transculturality mainly as "jenseits des Gegensatzes von Eigenkultur und Fremdkultur" (Welsch 1995, cited in Richter 2011, 117), which, in the English edition of Welsch's essay, translates to "beyond the contraposition of ownness and foreignness" (1999, 196). Richter argues that TCKs encoun-

ter diverse cultural elements, bridge several cultures, and are marked by being part of a third, newly-formed culture. Consequently, Richter argues that TCKs represent and articulate different cultures, cross-cultural values, and norms ("kulturübergreifende Werte und Normen"), as well as international experiences and intercultural competencies or, to cite Welsch (1995), "Fusionen bis in ihren Kern hinein."[11] Richter concludes that TCKs are thus "transcultural personalities" (2011, 117).

While the concept of "transculturalists" (Berg and Éigeartaigh 2010a) and the understanding of TCKs as "transcultural personalities" (Richter 2011) draw attention to experiences and narratives of individuals similar to those of Paul, they fail to acknowledge processes of change within "cultures" which are unfortunately still based on a problematic understanding of homogeneity. This tendency stems from Welsch's understanding of transculturality, according to which cultures have a "core" (Kern). As Brosius and Wenzlhuemer (2011, 11) argue, "the matter is even more complicated since we must reflect on the role of local notions of, for example, beauty, authenticity, or realism without essentialising them."

For my analysis, the terms "transculturalist," "TCK," and "transcultural personalities" are too static because they presuppose a specific, mixed identity that is in opposition to fixed "authentic" others. Processes of cultural identity negotiations, however, are flexible, relational, and situational. My work does follow Richter's (2011) initial linking of TCKs—or better, expatriate youths—with transculturality. However, my ethnographic approach goes beyond Richter's account, which is based on established narratives of people who label themselves as TCKs, by including practices that contradict or impair the building of the "transcultural personalities" that Richter sees. To analyze such contradicting practices—for instance the retreat from urban China to comfortable and familiar expatriate enclaves in Shanghai—it is necessary to go beyond Welsch's notion of transculturality as a state of being.

In contrast, transculturality's dynamic processes have received more attention from authors such as Fernando Ortiz, whose early writings on what he termed "transculturation" were seemingly unknown to Welsch when he coined his term. Ortiz developed the concept of transculturation in the 1940s, in his work *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Ortiz 1970), which analyzes the production of these crops in Cuba. Based on empirical evidence, Ortiz describes the rapid global spread of tobacco farming and assesses the reasons for its change in "social significance as it passed from the cultures of the New World to those of the Old." He calls

11 Richter here refers to the German article from 1995, but the passage quoted here appears in an online abstract at: http://www.forum-interkultur.net/Beitraege.45.0.html?&tx_textdb_pi1[showUid]=28. In the summary provided on the forum website, Welsch writes, "Vielmehr sind Kulturen charakterisiert durch vielfältige Verflechtungen, Durchmischungen und "Fusionen" bis in ihren Kern hinein" (cultures are rather characterized through manifold entanglements, mixtures, and "fusions" reaching into their core).

this process "the transculturation of tobacco" (ibid., 183) and argues that transculturation defines what he saw as "the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture that have taken place here" (ibid., 98). The term, he claims, more adequately describes these historical events than the term "acculturation," which had been frequently employed until then to describe similar processes (ibid., 97). Bronislaw Malinowski (1970, viii), who wrote the introduction to Ortiz's book, supports the term and claims that "acculturation" is "an ethnocentric word" that connotes the idea that "the 'uncultured' is to receive the benefits of 'our culture'." He argues that "by the use of the term *acculturation* we implicitly introduce a series of moral, normative, and evaluative concepts which radically vitiate the real understanding of the phenomenon" (ibid., emphasis in the original). This phenomenon, which Ortiz defines as transculturation, is well-described by Malinowski as a

> process in which something is always given in return for what one receives, a system of give and take. It is a process in which both parts of the equation are modified, a process from which a new reality emerges, transformed and complex, a reality that is not a mechanical agglomeration of traits, nor even a mosaic, but a new phenomenon, original and independent (Malinowski 1970, viii–ix).

It is the emphasis on the "new, original and independent" realities that makes Ortiz's understanding of transcultural processes, as German cultural anthropologist Gertraud Koch (2008, 12) points out, an early acknowledgement of the emancipatory potential that lies in the concept of transculturation. It shows, according to Koch, that "the dominant culture" does not remain uninfluenced in this process (ibid.). Yet, while Ortiz's concept of transculturation emphasizes the creative processes of new formations, it remains problematically close to essentializing "authentic" cultures that then merge into new ones. Even better suited to critically examine Paul's and his peers' lives in Shanghai and, particularly, their cultural identity negotiations is ethnologist and psychoanalyst Maya Nadig's idea of "transculturality in progress."

Nadig's (2004) concept of "transculturality in progress" is highly sensitive to the dangers of essentializing culture and describes migratory milieus, cooperative spaces, and transcultural relations as the "frames in which people with different cultural backgrounds perceive the difference of cultures and negotiate their identity and self-design" (ibid., 9). Instead of talking about distinct cultures, Nadig suggests that "experiences, emotions, perceptions of others, and strategic positions are consciously and discursively modelled along the forming of affiliations, the drawing of boundaries, and differentiation between the alien and the own, selves and others" (ibid.). If we base our understanding of transculturality on a concept of culture that, as Nadig (ibid., 10) suggests, sees culture "as plural and in motion" and defines it "as a practice," we can use transculturality as

a concept to investigate "the development and transformation of identity constructs within the context of transcultural relations," and focus on "the subsequently developed forms of translation, convergence, mergence, the new boundaries, and differentiation." According to Nadig, transculturality leads us to analyze both "the context within which individuals and groups interact" and "the material, discursive and practical manifestations of cultural identity and their change to the extent that mutual (transcultural) understanding is either made possible or impaired" (ibid.).

Many of Paul and his peers' spatial practices that I will discuss throughout this ethnography are linked to boundaries that often impair exchanges and understanding with local Chinese youth, such as the physical, social, and cultural boundaries of gated communities and international schools. Their forms of belonging and identity positioning, however, demonstrate the students' own perspectives and identification with being "in-between" and their need to improve their (transcultural) understanding in various contexts. Nadig shows that, in cultural studies and psychoanalysis, similar conceptualizations of such spaces of progress and "in-betweenness" were developing. She argues that these concepts of in-between spaces in regards to cultural identity (harkening back to Bhabha 1990; Bhabha 1997; Bhabha [1994] 2009) and the intermediate spaces conceptualized in psychoanalytical approaches to identity (drawing on Winnicott 1971) both entail "mediating between inner/individual and outer/cultural reality, or between selves and others" (Nadig 2004, 17). The individual, self-reflective narratives of Paul and other teenagers I met include such mediations. While some students negotiate between differences they perceive between their parents and themselves, others mediate between school and home, or across dividing lines in class between their former social networks and their new expatriate circles in Shanghai.

Human geographer Robert Pütz (2004) argues that there are also strategic elements in such identity negotiations. Writing about entrepreneurs of Turkish origin in Berlin, he sees transculturality as practice. This concept explains and resolves a contradiction between the theoretical standpoint that homogeneous cultures do not exist on the one hand, and the everyday use and experience of signs and practices that permanently (re)produce such essentializations of fixed, homogenous cultures, on the other. Pütz does not consider cultural embeddedness to be something fixed, but argues that it is created through communicative practices in a specific situation and is thus open to change (ibid., 29). He admits that different cultural symbolic systems are important for an individual's social practice but understands these systems as forming a "repertoire" to which the individual has access and from which he or she chooses which practices to adopt and when (ibid.). Combined with such an interpretative and symbolic understanding of culture, Pütz's concept of transculturality as practice begs the question of why cultural boundaries are drawn (Pütz 2004, 11), rather than inquiring about the state of seemingly homogenous cultures. Concepts of transculturality allow for individuals to articulate belonging to

different imagined communities in whose construction processes they are permanently involved (ibid., 13). The self-positioning on both sides of certain borders can, according to Pütz's view, be seen as the ability of individuals to deal flexibly with codifications of identity (ibid.). He takes up the idea formulated by Welsch (1999) that individuals possess or have access to different cultural frames of reference. Pütz (2004, 27) maintains that, with the help of the concept of transculturality, the inner-outer differentiation that comes with every border is conceptually shifted onto the individual. Furthermore, Pütz sees transculturality as an observational concept (Beobachtungskonzept) (ibid., 13) or analyzing concept (Analysekonzept) (ibid., 28) that can serve the researcher as a methodological tool. Transculturality is a useful tool for sharpening one's focus and shedding light on the cultural aspects of practices, their borders, and their entanglements. Consequently, it can, as Brosius and Wenzlhuemer (2011, 11) put it, "be used to relate to a particular research topic as well as to an analytical method."

Pütz defines transculturality as a certain practice of specific subjects, which can be divided into "everyday transculturality" and "strategic transculturality" (ibid., 13) and describes the former as concrete routines with which the subjects are able to position themselves in different frames of reference (Deutungsschemata). If these frames of reference are reflected upon by their actors and used intentionally, "everyday transculturality" becomes "strategic transculturality." "Strategic transculturality" means moving self-reflexively in different symbolic systems (Pütz 2004, 28), and is reminiscent of what the British social anthropologist Steven Vertovec (1997, 294) described fittingly as "milieu moving:"

> Such examples of "crossing" and "milieu-moving," I believe, differ from the usual notions of "hybridity" discussed in much literature within Cultural Studies. While the latter celebrate new mixtures, the former indicate ways in which individuals not only create syncretic forms, but are competent in—and can improvise from—a number of (in some ways discrete, in some ways overlapping) cultural and linguistic systems (Vertovec 1997, 294).

This competence in "milieu moving" is, for instance, illustrated by one of the students I met in Shanghai, Xia, who was raised in Germany by his Chinese parents, and who describes how alternating between his German school in Shanghai and his home forces him to alter his role, speech, and behavior to suit each location. Such a self-reflective practice of strategic transculturality also enables us to understand Paul's way of labeling himself differently in regards to nationality, as he did during our talk on Wulumuqi Road. This becomes even clearer when we meet again a few months later in Germany. Triggered by leaving Shanghai and his move to Germany, he suddenly labels himself Brazilian. It is a strategic decision based on his judgment of what actually might be accepted and confirmed by others in his new situation. Paul expresses no worries about his recent choice to

move to Germany after graduating and stresses his ability to adapt anywhere—especially as his private, English-language university provides another international "bubble." During this second interview in Germany, he conveys a calmness and effortlessness about his many relocations—and his recent move to Germany in particular—before he suddenly tells me he considers himself Brazilian, now, even though he only lived in Brazil until he was six years old. I am surprised by his new choice of cultural identity. While I wonder whether my presence makes him feel obliged to make a statement of belonging, he lists his very pragmatic reasons for this choice by explaining why his other places of upbringing are unsuitable to define him: he simply does not want to identify himself as American and, given the way he looks, he cannot be Chinese.

Paul's way of thinking about and rationally arguing for his current cultural identity in Germany can clearly be seen as strategic in Robert Pütz's (2004) sense and also supports Pütz's (ibid., 30) observation that actors themselves have self-reflective access to culture—a necessary premise to use transculturality strategically. I find Pütz's argument for self-reflective actors who continuously (and sometimes strategically) re-position themselves by drawing from their "cultural repertoire" (ibid., 29), thus simultaneously adding to this "repertoire" more convincing than the simple TCK (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009) or "transculturalist" (Berg and Éigeartaigh 2010b) label. To further stress this self-reflexive access among young privileged migrants to cultural practices and the consequent (strategic) mediations between inner/individual and outer/cultural realities (Nadig 2004), I suggest framing their experiences, viewpoints, and practices in terms of gaining and employing "transcultural perspectives."

This ethnography examines and presents in detail how young privileged migrants like Paul view and narrate their experiences of moving and how they consequently construct subjective flexible cultural identities. Their stories show that "culture" is, as an ever-changing set of practices and meanings in an on-going process, "plural and in motion" (Nadig 2004, 10). This understanding of "culture" has been widespread in the discipline of anthropology since well before the rise of transcultural studies, as Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1992), for example, have put forward by calling for a focus on the production of cultural differences rather than view ing "culture" as a distinct entity. I draw on this understanding of "cultures" as continuous processes when speaking of transcultural perspectives. By using the term "perspectives," I additionally emphasize the idea of self-reflexivity, the ability to focus and reflect on the processes that manifest our understandings of "cultures" and their boundaries. For this reason, I agree with Brosius' assertion that transculturality also serves as a heuristic device (Brosius 2011, 28).

Based on my accounts of 43 expatriate youths in Shanghai in 2010, 2011, and 2012, I show that many of these students, especially those born of bicultural marriages or to parents with migrant biographies, develop such a transcultural perspective toward their own lives, a perspective that

is highly self-reflective upon their mobility and position, and the influence that family, the school environment, or Shanghai has on them. The term "perspective," which is common in transcultural studies, was even explicitly used by one student who was already mentioned, Xia—the son of Chinese parents, who grew up in Germany and was enrolled at a German school—to describe his challenges and desire to cope with such variations in his immediate environment. Despite the fact that my presence might have triggered some of the students' reflections and influenced them accordingly, I argue that transculturality as a method or specific perspective is not only reserved for the anthropologist or the academic, but is a form of reflection acquired by many of the teenagers who shared their experiences with me. Many students develop such self-reflexivity about their own entanglement as a coping strategy for a lifestyle of constant moving, whether it is they or their close friends who move.

This transcultural perspective on their own lives may at first seem to contradict the youths' everyday spatial practices of demarcation, such as Paul's bubble. However, spatial demarcations and transcultural perspectives actually go hand-in-hand. The students' own mobility can evoke a desire for stability on the one hand and a desire to broaden their point of view in order to manage the changes they experience on the other. Living on the move by no means erases but instead often provokes the desire to create familiar spaces, to settle despite having to face the next move. Thus a constant negotiation takes place between drawing boundaries and crossing them.

When applied by the researcher, a transcultural perspective sheds light on how these youths shift and merge different cultural practices, positions, and creative formations of new subjectivities. It can also serve to inform moments of boundary-drawing and practices of making distinctions.

During the interviews, I get the impression that Paul, like me, has difficulty grasping the full breadth of the changes he has experienced throughout his lifetime. Instead of describing or contemplating these differences that he experiences like the other students, Paul simply describes what has helped him to emplace himself: the social worlds of "bubbles." It is thus impossible to understand the "transcultural turbulences" (Brosius and Wenzlhuemer 2011), the experience of borders and difference in narratives of cultural identity by people like Paul, without a more detailed ethnographic investigation into the "production of difference within common, shared, and connected spaces" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 16). In other words: transcultural perspectives that focus on the shifting and transgression of boundaries require detailed ethnographic insights into the production of cultural differences at specific sites. For this reason, I chose to investigate expatriate youths' spatial practices in Shanghai.

Why are spatial practices insightful? Tracing the importance of place

To further understand expatriate youths' everyday lives and their collective and cultural identity performances, I studied their spatial practices in Shanghai. Drawing on the research tradition of urban anthropology,[12] my work therefore examines specific places favored by expatriate youths and connects them to their experience of Shanghai as a rising mega-city, as well as to their memories of places elsewhere. With this emphasis, I not only contribute to filling the gap of research on geographies of youth that scholars have recently turned to (e.g. the founding of the journal *Children's Geographies*), but also attune my work to methodologies in ethnographic studies that foreground the importance of place in a world of flux.[13]

While ethnographic fieldwork is usually tied to the idea of "being there," it is less clear what and when "there" means and what we can actually call "the field." This is particularly true when studying phenomena of migration. The lives of the individuals researched—as I will show throughout this ethnography—are tied to and embedded in many locales and diverse transnational spaces. Katie Walsh (2010), in a review of Fechter's (2007b) ethnographic work on expatriates in Indonesia, pointed out the difficulties inherent to using single-site research to trace such mobile practices: "Finally, there is a tension, evident in ethnographies of transnationalism and globalization more generally, that is connected to the difficulties of

12 The Chicago School of Sociology, founded in 1915, laid the groundwork for this field of study in particular with its later monographs in the 1960s and 1970s focusing on specific quarters, districts, and communities within the city (Wildner 1995, 6). Robert Ezra Park, founder of the Chicago School, studied in Berlin under Georg Simmel (Hannerz 1980, 22), whose progressive writings contemplating the living conditions of people in modern cities (Simmel 1903) can be seen as early stepping stones towards an urban anthropology (Wildner 1995, 6). Urban anthropology has always been influenced by history, sociology, and geography (Hannerz 1980, 4), in addition to its beginnings in Chicago. Hannerz has argued that the "remarkable pioneering work in urban ethnography carried out there particularly in the 1920s and 1930s" has shown that the boundary between sociology and anthropology can largely be disregarded (1980, 16). Only by the 1960s did anthropologists, habitually concerned with rural societies, increasingly turn their attention toward cities, faced with urbanization in their "traditional fields" as well as changes and so-called "urban problems" in their cities at home (ibid., 1). According to Hannerz, it was not until a decade later that the term "Urban Anthropology" emerged (ibid., 2). While early ethnographers focusing on cities investigated particular places within the city, later works in urban anthropology saw the necessity of considering the city as a complete whole with a central function in global society (Wildner 1995, 2).

13 Sociologist Les Back, who highlights how young people learn to make a cosmopolitan and multiracial city their home, shows how teenagers demonstrate local knowledge and sophisticated tactics on how to move through a city with its racism and high- and low-risk spaces. Back argues that youths combine their social knowledge to negotiate "the chequerboard of hatreds and violence" (ibid., 20) and seek out "places that give space *to be,* not places of identity or unitarity or fixed notions of selfhood, but a space to perform and claim belonging amid the inferno of contemporary city life" (ibid., 41).

trying to use single-site research to trace the mobile practices of transnationalism in everyday life" (Walsh 2010, 140).

In line with such criticism of single-sited research, I was often asked why I did not follow a multi-sited approach (Marcus 1995). While fieldwork in multiple places could produce other insights, I agree with Mark-Anthony Falzon's (2009) critique of multi-sited work, when he points out that, although a multi-sited approach at first seems to counteract a certain "incompleteness," the researcher's reflective choices inevitably limit the field in any approach: "Ultimately, both [single- and multi-sited approaches] are partial because both have their self-/imposed limits. Multi-sited ethnography is no more holistically inclined than its predessor [sic]" (ibid., 13).

Despite focusing exclusively on Shanghai, my work is informed by the strong global connections across multiple and large spatial scales that are part of expatriate youth's everyday lives. Expatriate children have often already moved several times. The continuous presence of these places in the students' lives is obvious not only in narratives of migration experiences, but particularly through the constant comparison of Shanghai to former places of residence. Furthermore, daily practices involve memories of other places that are constantly evoked through material connections (clothes or furniture bought elsewhere), sensuous experiences (food from home), and emotional paraphernalia (a postcard or an email from a close friend abroad). Urban geographer Jennifer Robinson (2010, 16) stresses the importance of the imaginary in the way we associate different places with each other, whether we have been to those places or not. She shows that these mental connections permeate our everyday lives: "Within a topological imagination, making one's way in a city commonly entrains a wide diversity of other places" (Robinson 2010, 16). Robinson underlines her argument by referring to case studies by Simone (2004), De Boeck and Plissart (2006), and Malaquais (2007), which illustrate that

> the livelihood strategies and imaginative worlds of city residents in places such as Doula and Kinshasa are entwined with other places elsewhere (such as New York and Brussels) both practically and imaginatively, in the sense that residents are always in the process of preparing to leave for an imagined elsewhere, that they already know much about other cities, or live an imaginary world that is both here and there (Robinson 2010, 16).

Robinson's approach helps us to understand that, for the students in my ethnography, the process of moving through and living in Shanghai is constantly tied to that which is elsewhere.

By acknowledging the continuous presence of other places in our daily lives, as it arises through the global circulation of people, images, technology, goods, money, and ideas—which anthropologist Arjun Appadurai

(2002) has conceptualized as ethno-, media-, techno-, finance-, and ideoscapes—we can observe that global cultural flows touch down in specific sites. For children on the move with their expatriate parents, this means that, although they may grow up transnationally, they always live somewhere particular, if only for a limited time. Brenda Yeoh and Katie Willis (2005, 270) point out that "transnational elites belong as much to the 'space of place' as to the 'space of flows'," and so do their children. Choosing to ground my research in Shanghai, I therefore decided not to focus on the links of one expatriate community to another, or the relations of family members dispersed across the globe, but rather to see how these global connections are negotiated in the everyday spaces of expatriate youths.

Consequently, my methodological approach follows those concepts of ethnography that promote the idea of grounding ethnographic research in particular sites, as scholars such as Zsuzsa Gille and Seán Ó Riain (2002) or Harri Englund (2002) have put forward. These approaches argue that focusing on specific places enables us to gain insight into the global networks of each site's actors: "We have argued for a global ethnography that still locates itself firmly in places but which conceives of those places as themselves globalized with multiple external connections, porous and contested boundaries, and social relations that are constructed across multiple spatial scales" (Gille and Ó Riain 2002, 290–291).

Similar to Gille and Ó Riain's suggested perspectives on specific places as "globalized with multiple external connections," Englund promotes a methodological focus on sites in recognition of their global connections. Englund (2002, 286), however, rejects the concept of localization due to its inherent misleading dichotomy as the opposite of globalization, and suggests a "postglobalist" perspective that works with the idea of "emplacement"—a term anthropologist David Howes ([2005] 2006, 7) later formed into a full-fledged concept that focuses on the "sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment"—to enhance sensitivity to situatedness in a globalized world. Englund's perspective enables an emphasis to be placed on the transformation of global elements in particular places:

> This perspective is postglobalist because it both builds on earlier insights into flows and circulations in a global space, and it recognizes specific sites and terrains as the conditions of their existence and transformation. Even the apparently most global phenomenon is continuously emplaced as it reaches its new destinations. As such, localization is doubly disqualified to capture the contours of emplacement. Not only does it evoke globalization as its logical opposite, it also conveys a sense of closure in local appropriations. If persons, institutions, and capital are always emplaced, the challenge is to understand the variable capacities of places to act as springboards for traveling, whether by people, ideas, or institutions (Englund 2002, 286).

Englund's (2002) postglobalist perspective supports my focus on Shanghai and the various specific locales within it. The methodological approaches by Gille and Ó Riain as well as Englund, however, prompt a consideration of the global connections these places are part of: "Not only is the so-called local an emergent property of nonlocal processes, the so-called global also requires particular sites and terrains to operate" (Englund 2002, 266). Willis, Yeoh, and Fakhri (2002, 506) have pointed out how this principle works within expatriate spheres: "Transnational elites may be evidence of processes at a global scale, but this 'global' is constructed and understood by operations of particular individuals in local spaces." A postglobalist perspective is thus useful for my research because it enables an understanding of expatriate youths' ways of life not only as the outcome of globalization, but sees these individuals as mobile yet emplaced actors.

To understand their experience of specific places in Shanghai further, my research on spatial practices is also theoretically informed by Howes's ([2005] 2006) idea of "emplacement" that I mentioned above. His concept of emplacement encourages paying particular attention to a variety of sensory impressions and enables us to recognize and highlight the importance of physical and emotional experiences in specific places. I therefore understand emplacement as the process of engaging with the "here and now."

Furthermore, ethnographer and filmmaker David MacDougall's (2006) notion of "social aesthetics" is helpful in highlighting the sensorial and embodied experiences of the youths' preferred spaces in Shanghai. He suggests paying attention to specific objects, such as "the design of buildings and grounds" or "the use of clothing and colors," and daily practices, "for instance the organization of students' time," to understand the "social aesthetics" of an environment (2006, 98). By understanding the "social aesthetic field" as a coalescence of different elements such as "objects and actions" (2006, 98), we can then analyze it by focusing on a specific community, its material environment, and the quotidian practices that occur within it. Social aesthetics are "both the backdrop and product of everyday life" (ibid., 108). MacDougall's notion directly relates to my own fieldwork experience. For example, the aforementioned concept explains how the social aesthetics of a classroom (the room's shape, lighting, and seating arrangements, which for students are intertwined with specific behavioral rules) can influence the range or depth of topics of the interviews I conducted at the students' schools. In these discussions, school-related issues were elaborated upon more than leisure activities. MacDougall's idea of social aesthetics thus helps us to further understand how the materiality and atmosphere of select places can foster certain practices or discussions among the youths, whether it be the school premises (Part III, Chapter 3) that evokes a certain behavior and conversation topics, or a nightclub (Part IV, Chapter 2) that promotes certain ways of dressing up. It demonstrates the students' active involvement in creating their own spaces as well as their roles in shaping Shanghai as a world city and stage for their own identity performances.

Youth culture scholar Andy Bennett (2000) shows that locality continues to play a role as "a relatively stable base for otherwise unstable and transient [...] identities" (Hodkinson 2007, 12). To understand how expatriate youths shape and use specific spaces as a source for identity and age performances in more detail, I also draw on geographer Doreen Massey's (1995, 204) argument that "space and place are never just the physicality of plans and bricks and mortar," but "products of our social interactions and imaginations," which we construct "in a constant negotiation with each other." Space and identity constructions are reciprocal. Massey (1998) has shown that this is particularly true for age identities. This correspondence is striking when looking at spatial ordering within populations, for example, which individuals are allowed on a playground vs. a cinema or bar, and which are not. As Massey notes, "indeed the very drawing of age lines and the definition of the spaces where particular age groups are allowed is part of the process of defining an age group in the first place. The control of spatiality is part of the process of defining the social category of 'youth' itself" (Massey 1998, 129). Massey's argument of reciprocity thus helped me to analyze how these particular teenagers' identity constructions and their typical performances were related to specific locations in the city of Shanghai.

In summary, in addition to focusing on cultural identity negotiations and youths' age-specific perspectives, my third theoretical and methodological focus analyzes expatriate youths' everyday spatial practices and their (dis)engagement with the "local" to find out what role "place" plays in their lives on the move. This is not an attempt to understand culture geographically. Rather, by following approaches in post-global ethnography, I aim to highlight how these teenagers embed different global elements in a host of particularities. Examining physical experiences of particular places in Shanghai provides a foundation for the overall experience of mobility that this ethnography traces.

The structure of this book

Paul's story exemplifies how entangled expatriate youths' positions toward their cultural identities can be. To gain a detailed understanding of such processes of positioning and forms of belonging, this ethnography will illustrate international youths' subjective and collective experiences and ways of managing migration processes. It will chronologically delineate the expatriate students' experiences of the decision to move, their arrival, ways of life and how they rationalize their stay, as well as the moment of leaving and moving on. Following this central narrative, the transit space of Shanghai will unfold successively, affording insights into its various spaces and meanings for expatriate youths. This book will also highlight how the majority of the teenagers in Shanghai understand it as a temporary or transitory space, and a liminal phase in their lives, or, as my seven-

teen-year-old interviewee Giovanni, who had been living in Shanghai for three years at the time of the interview, described it: "You are only here for a temporary period; like a long vacation." This book will follow, capture, and conceptualize this experience of "passing through," of transient emplacement.

To understand this experience in more depth, my ethnography will center on three main aspects, the theoretical foundations of which I have laid out in this introduction: the process of cultural identity negotiation, the age-specific experience of expatriation, and the role of places in a life on the move. This book therefore seeks answers to the following questions: How can we understand these mobile youths in terms of cultural identity? How do youths experience the move to Shanghai and how does their age shape that experience? And, finally, what roles do specific places and the city of Shanghai play in their globally connected lives? In addressing these questions, the individual chapters will focus on various aspects of the lives of young expatriates.

Part I, "Getting Acquainted," introduces the international youths whose lifestyles and world views I examine. It also depicts how I, as a researcher, approached and encountered expatriate students in Shanghai. The part opens with a summary of the general situation and size of the expatriate communities in Shanghai. Insights into the daily routines of international school life and portrayals of two peer groups follow, before I introduce the individual experiences of four expatriate teenagers.

Part II, "Leaving," provides the youths' retrospectives of the circumstances that led to their relocation to Shanghai. Chapter 1 shows that many of the teenagers felt they were denied an active role in the decision-making process regarding the move and were often reluctant or initially even against the idea of moving abroad. Connected to discussions about leaving, Chapter 2 delineates the emotional challenges of moving to Shanghai. Based on the students' commentary, it identifies their "culture shock," their reaction to an unfamiliar urban environment, new sensory impressions, and a lack of friends and extended family, as well as problems within the family related to the move. The different experiences of youths all underline that the times of leaving and arriving—or what Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier, and Sheller (2003) call "uprootings"—are highly emotional.

Part III, "Arriving," describes students' everyday practices upon arrival in Shanghai and their agency in making Shanghai their new home and community. Chapter 1 presents different students' ways of making sense of their new urban environment, not just in terms of navigation, and sensorial experiences, but also in terms of positioning themselves within the city. It demonstrates that managing the city means managing everyday life and the experience of migration, for instance by learning how to navigate between spaces of everyday practices and consumption, by giving spaces a social meaning, or by dividing Shanghai into familiar areas and "the city." Chapter 2 is concerned with practices and notions of home. After providing a detailed description of expatriate housing spaces—gated communities—

it identifies youths’ small-scale home-making practices, such as room decorating or family dinners, as well as larger processes of locating “home(s)” in their transnational networks. It demonstrates that, due to the expatriate teenagers’ experiences of mobility, “home” is a fluid concept with no single location and is simultaneously tied to various places, items, and people. It becomes evident that making and (re)imagining home(s), or collecting material goods to produce a sense of belonging, helps these teenagers to manage feelings of loneliness. For a deeper understanding of these practices and the notion of “home,” the chapter draws on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s (1987) concept of the rhizome. Chapter 3 examines the spaces of international schools and their critical roles as important nodes of the expatriate communities in Shanghai. The schools are sites for the continuous everyday routine of expatriate youths, as well as the place for meeting new friends and for engaging in various leisure activities. Chapter 3 also identifies how these schools underpin certain narratives of what it means to be an expatriate and illustrates how they foster the development of collective identities and provide a sense of community for many of the students and their families. Conversations with students also reveal that their perspective of being enrolled at an international school is linked to the interdependent feelings of privilege and pressure.

Part IV, “Living,” zooms in on particular age-specific spatial and social practices and foregrounds the youths’ efforts to create their own spaces. Discussions on age identities in Chapter 1 and ethnographic evidence from nightlife practices in Chapter 2 underline how the construction of collective age identities and related spaces are crucial for teenagers to gain meaning and agency in their migration experience. Chapter 3 provides a specific example of a teenage hangout spot close to the school campus which they refer to as “the shop”—a little street with eateries, a snack shop, and pool tables. This small alley constitutes an “open space” (Hassenpflug 2009, 31–33) in the city, which is shaped by the habits and economic interests of the shop-owners, as well as by the youths’ own agency and interests. Here local Chinese shop-owners, customers, and expatriate youths can meet. For the youths, most importantly, the shop provides an everyday space that, unlike the gated communities or the international schools where they spend most of their time, is not characterized by explicit behavioral expectations or rules. Chapter 4 investigates the teenagers’ relations to China and Shanghai’s local citizens. Based on discussions with the young expatriates on the issue of “integration,” the chapter highlights how the youths accept or even strengthen the exclusion of “China” from their everyday spaces. It also shows how many of the expatriate youths experience their physical difference as whites, and how this promotes a preference for locations in Shanghai that are mainly occupied or frequented by whites. It then demonstrates how the teenagers’ lack of interaction with Chinese youths and the experience of special (and often preferential) treatment by Chinese citizens lead to their feeling like “guests” in China.

Part V, “Moving On,” first presents the “fateful moment” (Giddens 1991, 112–114) of leaving Shanghai. It investigates the graduation festivities at a German school as a rite of passage (Van Gennep [1960] 1992) that prepares the students for their farewell and the transition to new social positions. The collective celebrations help the students to work through their emotions about leaving—an amalgamation of sadness, anxiety, and anticipation of what is to come. The last chapter summarizes the various facets of privileged migration experienced by these young expatriates and offers initial glimpses into their earliest experiences after leaving Shanghai.

In a larger context, the youths’ perspectives on their own lives and the experience of moving and living in expatriate communities that this ethnography captures, aim to contribute to an understanding of the interdependence and contradictions between the aspired flexibility of twenty-first century identities and the rigidity of cultural divisions based on nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class that are so apparent in our world.

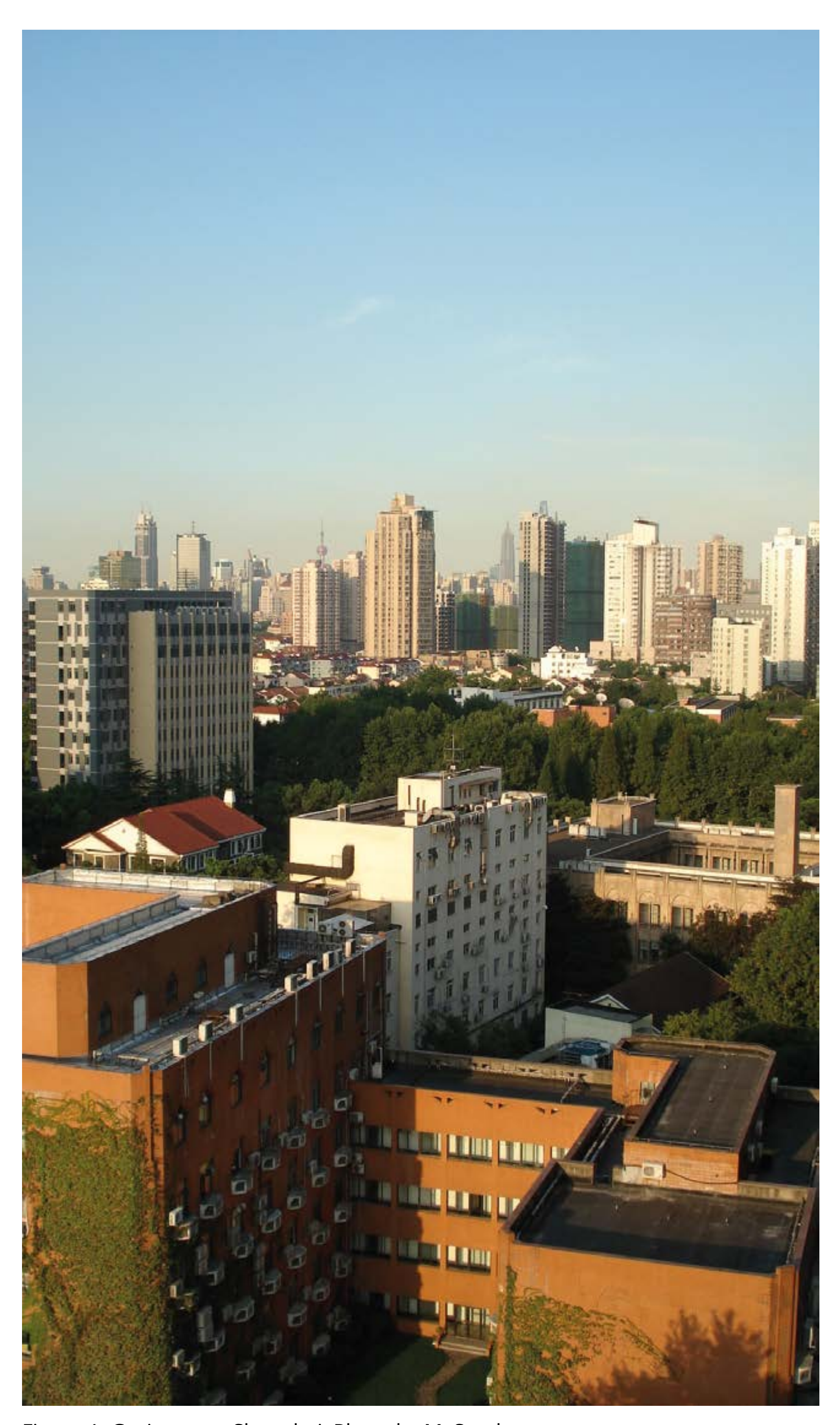


Figure 1. Gazing onto Shanghai. Photo by M. Sander.

PART I
Getting Acquainted

This ethnography explores how expatriate teenagers in Shanghai experience high international mobility. It examines their moves into and out of the city with their families, their ways of life, and the ways they make sense of the many moves and places in their lives. This first part introduces who these expatriate teenagers are. I begin by summarizing the general situation and size of the expatriate communities in Shanghai and provide illustrative examples of the daily routines of international school life for expatriate youths. I then present two peer groups and their activities, before I zoom in on the individual experiences and viewpoints of four expatriate teenagers. Finally, I explain my methodological approaches and challenges accessing the social world of expatriate youths, as well as my overall position in the field.

CHAPTER 1
Expatriates in Shanghai

The youths in this ethnography—teenagers that I have talked to and spent time with over the last few years in Shanghai—form a very heterogeneous and privileged group of migrants. This study focuses primarily on students aged fifteen to eighteen, but includes participants as young as nine. Most of these students move every three to four years, whenever one of their parents is relocated. All my subjects came to Shanghai jointly with their families. These relocations were usually arranged and (financially) supported by their parents' employers.

The metropolis of Shanghai is in part shaped by such expatriate youths, along with foreign tourists, university students, and transnational professionals, as well as Chinese citizens returning from stays abroad; all these individuals comprise an Appaduraic ethnoscape (1996), where various cultural flows converge. As these different kinds of migrants bring and follow transnational capital and global enterprises to Shanghai, many of them become part of Shanghai's heterogeneous international community. They shape, are integrated into, and identify with its spaces and the lifestyle and consumption habits associated with it. Shanghai, one of China's most thriving cities, hosts a considerably large expatriate community. The Shanghai Statistical Bureau lists a total of 164,359 foreigners residing in Shanghai in 2011, including 37,223 Japanese, 16,805 American, and 8,040 German citizens (Shanghai Statistical Bureau 2013). According to sociologist James Farrer's (2011) conversations with consulate and chamber of commerce officials in 2006, unofficial estimates are higher. He reckons that, in 2006, "70,000 to 100,000 Japanese, 20,000 to 30,000 Americans, and 12,000 to 20,000 Germans were living in Shanghai on various types of visas" (Farrer 2011).

This community commonly labels itself "expatriate," a term that is derived from the Latin "ex patria" and refers to someone living outside their native country (Coles and Fechter 2008, 5). The term is commonly shortened to expat. In Shanghai, it is used by human resource departments to describe employees who have been posted to Shanghai by their companies. It is also commonly used to refer to foreigners with a certain upper-class lifestyle. The actors of this study consider themselves part of this community and even label themselves as "expat children." It is for this simple reason of self-ascription that I chose to work with the term "expatriates." That "this term has itself become an identity referent with a set of shared meanings understood by those who adopt the label, manifest in particular practices such as socialising in certain areas" (Butcher 2009, 1361), will become clear throughout this ethnography.

The expatriate families under discussion all enjoy a privileged status. The parents' postings to Shanghai are usually tied to high financial benefits and packages that include allowances for health insurance, travel costs, car leases, housing, and private international schools. It is difficult to pinpoint how many expatriate families come to Shanghai accompanied by under-aged children, as the Shanghai Statistical Bureau does not offer age-specific statistical data. However, just based on the student bodies from Shanghai's thirteen largest international schools (each with multiple campuses and featuring curricula in English, French, or German), I estimate that at least 16,500 students attended during the 2011–2012 academic year. Although the majority of these schools offer education beginning with kindergarten—sometimes even nursery school—there are many additional international kindergartens. The actual number of children and youths with foreign passports in Shanghai must therefore be even larger. The Shanghai municipal government does not allow Chinese nationals to enroll in international schools, thus all their students are of foreign nationality.

Since school is a major part of each expatriate youth's life, it was through these institutions that I first gained access to the actors of my study. Nevertheless, as the following chapters illustrate, ethnographic fieldwork is predominantly based on constant engagement, mutual understanding, and individuals' willingness to trust the ethnographer and to share insights into their lives.

CHAPTER 2
Going to School

It is six in the morning when the alarm goes off in my small, single-room apartment in downtown Shanghai. I get up and leave the aging high-rise close to busy Jiaojiabang road and hurry to the next metro stop. It is a cold and humid morning in February, the metro is still empty, and I am spared loud phone conversations and the throng of passengers. I exit somewhere in the city's seemingly endless outskirts and try to catch a taxi. It is already eight when I finally arrive at my school. I am 28 years old and afraid of being late for class.

I patiently wait at the entrance gate of the German and French School campus to receive a visitor's pass from the Chinese guards. I am grateful that I am allowed to observe at the German School; most of the other international schools in Shanghai were not willing to open their doors to me. Wanting to work with minors brought several challenges: getting the permission of headmasters and teachers to visit classes and securing parents' consent to record interviews often seemed impossible. When a counselor and a teacher at two different American schools voiced interest in supporting my research and introduced my project to their principals, I hoped I could spend time with their students, but these schools rejected my research request on unknown grounds. Writing to school principals or parent associations directly also proved unsuccessful, except in the case of one British school. In November 2011, they collated a list of nine students who I was able to meet for group discussions on the school premises. At the same time, I repeatedly introduced myself to teachers, psychologists, and parents at events such as fairs or talks, and was able to visit a Singaporean international school to conduct some group interviews with students from the eleventh grade of their International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The group interviews I conducted at these two schools contributed valuable perspectives to this ethnography. However, I was reminded of anthropologist Ulf Hannerz's description of "anthropology by appointment" where "access to people, to informants, is in fact often limited, regulated and timed" (Hannerz 2006, 34). I wanted to move beyond this regulated interaction and the restrictions of interviewing at schools to finally explore expatriate youths' everyday practices. But this proved even more difficult because expatriate children spend most of their days in school or at home and both these spaces are challenging to enter as an outsider. At yet another open expatriate event in early December 2010, I was able to introduce myself to the German school's headmaster, who turned out to be very supportive. Finally allowed to observe an eleventh

grade class and to interact with students on a regular basis, I started visiting them shortly before the Christmas break. Now I routinely find myself standing in line for my visitor's pass.

The last students arrive and are entering the premises, opening the automatic doors with their student ID cards. I spot sixteen-year-old Charlie, a student from "my" class in the crowd, and it calms me to see a familiar face. I am not the only one running late. We wave at each other, I point to the desk officer at the front gate, and signal that I will be inside soon. She waits for me on the stairs and we hug to say hello. Charlie is the daughter of Chinese parents, but was born and grew up in Germany until her family moved to Shanghai when she was twelve years old. Chatting on our way to the classroom, she reminisces about the last time we saw each other at Mural, a night club, and asks me about my Chinese New Year break. She stayed at her Chinese grandmother's place, which, according to her, was a bit boring, and then went to Sri Lanka.

When we arrive at the classroom, just on time, I say hello to the teacher and drop onto a chair next to the sink, outside the U-shaped arrangement of tables where the students sit. The teacher says good morning, which has no effect whatsoever on the noise level, and welcomes me to his English class. Students are to work on group projects today and they freely mingle, talk, and laugh. They are between fifteen and eighteen and are one and a half years away from graduation. Grateful for being able to get to know them and meet them on a regular basis rather than at one-time interviews, I walk over to Karina and Lara (both new this school year) and say hello to Alex and Don (an inseparable duo) before taking a seat on the new couch, to simply listen to and watch what is going on around me. I say hello to Antonia—daughter of a Chinese-German marriage, Shanghai veteran, and my key contact over the last few weeks—who seems to be lost in thought, staring at a red piece of cardboard in front of her. I ask her about her group's topic—Shakespeare on the Screen—and we start chatting. Two girls from the same group, Charlie—my partner in running late for class this morning—and Olivia, from Belgium, join in. Now everyone seems busy working on posters and presentations covering different topics about Shakespeare. Students are allowed to leave the classroom and there is a lot of movement. Meanwhile, someone has organized the "media cart" and every group takes out a computer to work on their handouts or to do research online.

I go to the little snack bar in the piazza and get a coffee. Slowly walking back to the classroom across the long hallways and up the endless stairs, I realize how I have become accustomed to this place over the past weeks since I began visiting in December 2010. The silence in the building during class now seems friendlier and the contact with students has become easier.

Back in the classroom, I look around and take some notes. As the popular website International Movie Data Base (IMDB) website is blocked in China and the school computers have no VPN or proxy installed to get

around the virtual wall, Olivia is searching for another website listing numbers and information on Shakespeare film adaptations. We start to discuss Internet blocking in China, because blocking IMDB does not seem plausible to us. Olivia mentions the typical cases of Facebook and YouTube. Antonia states that she can understand the Chinese government hindering access to these. This discussion continues for a few minutes and I notice how, at times like this, the role of the Chinese state surrounding the German "bubble" in which these students live can suddenly become apparent. Eventually, the conversation changes topic and the girls focus on their poster, again.

When a boy from the group working next to the girls looks over at their poster, his eyes squint to examine their heading. Olivia asks, with surprise in her voice: "Can you actually see anything? Your eyes are so narrow!"[1] Antonia jumps in: "Hey, are you dissing Chinese eyes?" Olivia responds: "No, I just find that fascinating." Some mumbling goes on between the boy and his group. They ask Antonia to paint the headline for their poster and Antonia agrees to do so for 10 *kuai*. She walks over to their poster and I join, still somewhat lost in thought about the comment on the student's eyes and the rigorous bashing of comments that might be conceived as racist. Do students draw boundaries based on the physical differences between "Asian" and "white" students? Olivia and Charlie leave the room shouting that we could find them in the empty senior classroom across the hall. When Antonia skilfully finishes writing the headline on the boys' poster, we join the two girls.

The three teenagers sit on the couch and I seat myself on a chair. Charlie is finishing an apple, which she felt was inappropriate to eat in front of the teacher. I think about rules and the ways students' behaviors are strictly regulated and immediately wonder if it is actually okay for me to drink coffee in class—as for instance the English teacher does. I struggle with my in-between position and, like other ethnographers working with youth (Weißköppel 2001, 75), often find myself thrown back into my own adolescence. The school setting—an environment I have not revisited since my own graduation nine years prior—particularly evokes memories of my teenage years. The whole routine still feels strangely familiar. Listening to teachers' explanations and student discussions, scribbling into my notebook, I often get lost in the classroom situation, even finding myself thinking "I hope (s)he doesn't ask me!" This was of course never the case. My own inner transformation back into a high school student come to an abrupt halt when teachers ask me to contribute to teaching a lesson in Ethics class (at a German school), or in a Theory of Knowledge class (at a Singaporean school). In order to gain access to the classes, I do not object, and even use the opportunity to have students produce valuable research material such as mind maps (in their ethics class) or mental maps

1 Since the students usually speak German at school, translations have been provided here.

(a slightly different exercise, used in their geography class). Afterwards, teachers in the staff room where I occasionally go to take notes, talk about students' behavior and abilities, seeming wishing to draw me to "their side." This in-betweenness of my situation is part of the reason why I have trouble positioning myself within the overall field. Being neither student nor teacher seems confusing not only to me but to the students as well. In contrast to Weißköppel, who during her research at a middle school in Germany (Realschule) rejected students' offers to use the casual German "Du" in order to keep the age difference as a form of managing distance that to her felt necessary (Weißköppel 2001, 75), I decided to meet the students on the same level, or at least to the extent that this is possible in a research situation. I therefore offered my first name (and, in the German context, the informal "Du") as a way of addressing me. However, while some students, like Antonia, relate to me on the same level from the beginning, others fall back to addressing me formally again and again. To me, it feels that their choice of address has become the battleground signifying my status and role, as well as the need to take time to establish trust, regardless of my offer of familiarity.

While Charlie finishes her apple, I ask the girls about their weekend plans. Nothing so far, except a Star Wars night at Antonia's for the weekend after. She knows the movies by heart and can almost talk along. They are planning to start at eight in the evening—after basketball practice—and watch until eight in the morning. A coffee machine and the promise of hitting each other should anyone fall asleep will help them stay up. Olivia thinks they also need "something fun" (was Lustiges), meaning hard alcohol. Antonia replies that this is impossible because her parents are home, but beer would be okay. Charlie and Olivia, however, do not like beer. Olivia looks disappointed. Charlie says that "you don't always need alcohol." Other students start coming into the room as the next class is about to begin, so we get up and return to our own classroom.

I sit down again and scribble into my notebook. "A lot of Anglicisms," I write. "Does this have something to do with Shakespeare and being in an English class? Or is it a general phenomenon among German expat kids?" Meanwhile, one student has opened his Flickr account. He and Olivia discuss a commentary someone wrote beneath a picture of Olivia's boyfriend. The question seems to be centered on determining who wrote that commentary, but I cannot really follow their discussion, due to my lack of familiarity with Flickr. When Olivia returns to her group to work on the presentation, I join in discussing their topic and ask them whether they have considered speaking about general difficulties when adapting theater plays for the screen. They have not, and Olivia immediately starts to google it. Trying to restrain myself from getting too involved, I turn to writing in my notebook and watching them work on their presentation.

Class is over. I am still not used to the absence of a school bell that was so prominent in my own school life. Students are shouting, "Are we eating

at the shop?"[2] I walk over to talk to Kressi and Mia. Mia inquires about my dissertation and I tell her that I am working on the overall structure, and explain the different chapters and parts to her. Mia poses questions and comments about my work and is keen to read my ethnography once it is finished or published, or even before, which leads to questions of representation, anonymity, and the consequences of my texts. Thus my ethnographic research practices, reflections, and writing have become part of the teenage students' daily lives. In other words, in a conversation such as the one I have with Mia, the practice of writing is embedded in its larger context. This conversation is just one example of how research is a practice, an engagement with the youths, as Massey concisely describes:

> Here what we might have called representation is no longer a process of fixing, but an element in a continuous production; a part of it all, and itself constantly becoming. This is a position which rejects a strict separation between world and text and which understands scientific activity as being just that—an activity, a practice, an embedded engagement in the world of which it is a part. Not representation but experimentation (2005, 28).

No one who writes about real people in real life can ignore the fact that words may have consequences for the people they write about—and alter their images of Self, labeling by others, their relationships, or the politics structuring their everyday practices. Caroline Brettell and other anthropologists (1993) address this issue and ask what happens when they read what we write. What are the consequences for the researched, the ethnographer, the relationship between them, and for the writing itself? While this question was unknown to early ethnographers whose language of writing often differed from those whom they studied (Brettell 1993), it certainly causes me great concern and prompts serious contemplation. The problem of securing anonymity troubles me in particular and proves difficult in regards to maintaining my own scientific standards when describing specific locations and practices. While many students were eager to appear in "the book" with their real names, we agreed that they themselves should choose their own code names, which at least render them anonymous to outsiders. This, however, does not secure complete anonymity. My research focus on urban sensory experiences requires detailed descriptions of places that make schools and locations traceable for the informed reader. As in my conversation with Mia, I repeatedly discuss these issues with the students themselves. I also address it in conversations with teachers and principals, and the community ultimately agrees to accept the potential ramifications. I face a greater moral dilemma when it comes to

2 "The shop" refers to a small back alley close to the school campus where a few eateries and a snack kiosk can be found. Part IV, Chapter 3 analyzes this space in detail.

the fact that the students on whom my work focuses almost all know each other and no degree of anonymizing—unless I enter the realm of the fictitious—can ensure that they will not recognize their peers. Consequently, I very carefully omit all hostile or derogatory remarks that the teenagers make against their peers. Hostilities exist, but are not crucial to my work.

Daniel Goldstein (2002) comments on the impact of the ethnographer's presence as that of a future author in the field, describing how his informants in the Andes in Bolivia were continuously concerned about "the book" he would write. Goldstein argues that one can see ethnographic writing in a positive light, as a form of indigenous media, or a means of self-representation.

> Even in more ordinary sorts of fieldwork contexts, in which the final product of the ethnographer/informant encounter is not a visual but a textual representation, informants may regard ethnography as a resource that they can use for their own purposes, and so seek to establish control over the ways in which they will be represented by the ethnographer (Goldstein 2002, 487).

In Goldstein's case, the informants strategically emphasized and performed certain aspects they considered important and most likely to secure financial benefits in the future, for instance by attracting NGOs. Consequently, he also experienced a lot of mistrust, because they feared his writings might highlight aspects that could endanger their initiatives.

While the teenagers in Shanghai are aware that my work will bring them no financial benefit, it still becomes obvious that they are also highly concerned about my work and how it will represent their lives.[3]

Mia and I change the topic and talk about a Karl Lagerfeld Photography exhibition that I went to see with a Chinese friend of mine. I know that Mia and Kressi are interested in photography and fashion. Unfortunately, I do not recall the exact address of the gallery at the Bund but I promise to look it up for them. Then I return to Karina and Lara. Lara (who is busy kissing

3 Goldstein (2002, 496) argues that, in response to mistrust, some fieldworkers end up focusing "on ritual, or politics, or other public domains of social life [...] finding that, in addition to their accessibility, these are in fact the topics that their research consultants would most prefer them to study." Likewise, one can, on the one hand, interpret the relationship between the participating teenagers and me as a trustful one in regards to my presence during nightlife and illegal activities. I am sure that, to a certain extent, my participation led to acceptance and offered the possibility for students to also casually inquire about my own life and to get to know me better. On the other hand, it soon became obvious that this invitation and willingness to trust me also had something to do with the fact that the youths liked to see their nightlife activities take center stage in my work. For them, writing about nightlife was crucial for representing their lifestyle; it was how they wanted to be represented. They were also eager to talk about nightlife activities during the interviews, while emotional difficulties associated with the move to Shanghai were, in contrast, often mentioned in passing, not elaborated upon, and seemed to provoke unease and careful wording. In short, the depiction of difficulties was rather unpopular.

her boyfriend) and Karina agree to meet me for an interview the following week. We exchange email addresses and phone numbers. Karina seems very interested, Lara a bit unmotivated. I exit the classroom and bump into Andrea, whom I met two weeks ago on a Friday night at Mural. We discuss my dissertation project and she is curious about the differences I found between students at her school and those at others schools in Shanghai. Andrea is interested in giving an interview and we arrange to meet at a café downtown in the next few days. At this moment, I see the door of "my" classroom shutting, quickly say goodbye, and silently sneak inside.

In German class, I confirm with the teacher that I may join his class today. He agrees and officially starts class by addressing the upcoming exams. The students lament as usual and then open their books. Communication analysis has already been on the lesson plan for a couple of periods. Today, we read a text on kissing. One student reads the whole article out loud. It addresses the famous study by Margaret Mead that explored the interaction between American service men and local residents in wartime Britain, focusing on the issue of kissing and the different meanings attributed to a kiss. The textbook explains that, while Americans kiss early in romantic relationships, a kiss came at a much later stage for British women in the 1940s. The students all seem very interested in the topic and the teacher encourages them to apply Watzlawick's communication analysis in order to explain. But first he asks: "How do you flirt today?" As the text had explained that kissing was, according to Mead, only step twenty-five for British women, the girls sitting close to me count: "eye contact," "smiling," "talking," "having a drink," "exchanging phone numbers," "adding on Facebook," "first text message," and "the first date." Bjorn, who has only been in Shanghai for half a year, jumps in and, seemingly agitated, shouts: "No! First date? That's only because they make such a big deal out of it in movies!" Other boys join in. The girls protest: "If it is important to you, you put an effort into that first date!" Alex comments critically on the romantic ideal of love at first sight and how this draws girls to the cinema. The teacher draws from some of the remarks and asks: "If we watch movies from other cultures, is that similar? How about movies from India or China?" The class discusses and Antonia describes a Chinese movie that typically ends with the first kiss in the last scene. Everybody in class now seems to talk simultaneously and I can hardly follow, let alone take notes on all the comments. Antonia, agitatedly, voices how you cannot just end a relationship after two months in China. "You are immediately considered a slut!" The class reacts by shouting "What?" Some students contradict her. "Okay, that's how it is in my family," Antonia adds, indirectly referring to her latest break-up. The teacher draws the attention back to the text and the corresponding exercises in the book: "Education, cultural differences, what else is there in that text?" Students comment on the different roles and role relationships, historical developments in the US and Britain, and the subconscious in Watzlawick's theory. When the teacher asks them to take into consideration that some cultures might be even more differ-

ent than the US and England, one student brings up the example of sex before marriage: “This can get really serious.” The teacher follows up and starts talking about honor killings, which according to him happen when girls adapt but their families stick to their traditions from home. I find this example clichéd, but stay in my role as the silent observer. A few students remark on how this example is particularly extreme. The teacher agrees, but holds to his opinion that “cultural conflict can lead to death.” By now, I have learned that teachers use such exaggerations and provocations to trigger discussions. We move on to the next textbook exercise. The teacher uses his drama skills to underline the idea of roles and role expectations. He gives the example of a manager who seems unable to leave his manager role behind when he gets home. The students analyze that this father obviously does not realize how he is trapped in his role and that his family has a different role expectation. The students start thinking about what to do in such a case. Olivia suggests clearly stating: “Listen to me.” Another student proposes to “write a letter saying ‘Call me when you understand’ and then leave.” Olivia finds that this drastic measure should only be used when other means have failed. Xia proposes sending the father on a holiday. Kressi suggests clearly stating that “your family isn’t your office.”

It seems as if the students can identify perfectly with the scenario they are discussing and I wonder about the manager parents in their lives. Most of the forty-three international school students I interviewed have parents employed by foreign companies. Usually, the father’s career was the primary motive behind the move to Shanghai. While all their fathers are employed, only some of the mothers work, and mostly do so part-time. Their father’s jobs range from logistics to the automobile industry, while one father works as a manager for an international hotel chain and another at a university.

Class is almost over and the teacher wraps up the discussions on Watzlawick and his communication theory by pointing out that the meta-level is the key. How right he is. The meta-level is often present in my conversations and interviews with expatriate youths. Their perspectives continually impress me. It is their self-reflective voices that form the heart of this study. In particular, the members of two peers groups from the German school that I was able to spend time with, thanks to Antonia and Bjorn, provided insights into expatriate youths’ lives beyond school and their reflections upon these aspects.

CHAPTER 3
Joining Two Peer Groups

> *A relatively youthful appearance is undoubtedly helpful when hanging around street corners with teenagers (Wulff 1995, 7).*
>
> *I was incredibly nervous of the teenagers.*
> *I felt 12 years old again (Skelton 2001, 170).*

Joining the teenagers outside the realm of school, in particular during their nightlife activities, proved tremendously valuable in helping me to establish my position among them. These occasions helped me to contextualize the students' verbalized reflections upon their lives and to grasp their experiences and understandings of mobility, being young, and belonging to the expatriate community. These opportunities also made it possible for me to prove that I could be trusted.[4] While teachers actively try to avoid such situations by making sure they do not frequent the same clubs or bars, my role and participation in activities gradually became accepted after months of engaging with the teenagers outside of school and sharing my own story with them.[5] This constant negotiation of my role and proximity in the beginning, along with later finding myself placed, at least temporarily, within the group, seem typical for ethnographic work. I was happy and comfortable taking on the role of an older sister who reports from university life in Germany, as this turned out to be the aspect of my life everyone was most interested in. While the practice of listening closely is the most important part of any ethnographic project, I also experienced that sharing is vital to overcoming hierarchies and the distance that hinder the ethnographer who wants to capture youths' own perspectives and voices.

In line with these fieldwork practices, I chose a relational approach that acknowledged the ties between me and the youths I researched, and the influence of those ties on matters of access as well as on my perspective.[6]

---

4 Students witnessed that I would not judge them for smoking marijuana and that I would not reject the offer to dance or occasionally drink with them when they raised a glass—sometimes even "to the thesis," to encourage me to join in. They felt that I was not only doing research but enjoying sitting next to them on the couches talking about music, school, and relationships.

5 Finding my role(s) meant that I not only needed to position myself between teachers and students but also among the students. While I tried not to take sides in their arguments, which sometimes went counter to my own desires and school memories of being accepted and belonging to a certain group, I inevitably established closer relationships and friendships with some of the students. This was due to a mutual interest in each other's lives.

6 "A relational approach to research assumes that the patterns that are 'found' by researchers are products of what occurred between two or more people—the researcher and the researched. The narrative in an interview or the responses in a survey [...] are jointly constructed" (Way 2004, 171).

While Shanghai as the research site and expatriate teenagers as the main actors of my study had been set from the start, the paths I followed to understand their lives were often improvised. Coleman and Collins (2006) highlight the role the researcher's choice of focus plays, arguing that "fields are as much 'performed' as 'discovered,' framed by boundaries that shift according to the analytical and rhetorical preferences of the ethnographer and, more rarely, the informant" (Coleman and Collins 2006, 17). Thus my "field," my point of view on expatriate youths and the accounts I gathered, was influenced by my own stance, perspective, and abilities. Additionally, different gatekeepers played a crucial role in my navigation in the field, allowing or restricting access to certain sites, events, or people. It is my keen interest in students who actively explore Shanghai on their own, as well as certain key facilitators like Antonia, that finally led me to focus on and spend time with two peer groups in particular. These two groups consisted of one all-girls group and one all-boys group.[7]

3.1 Fieldwork with "the girls:" real ambitions and fake Louboutins

"The girls" are Antonia, Mia, Kressi, Charlie, Olivia, and Andrea. They were between fifteen and seventeen years old when I first met them at school. Antonia in particular played a vital role in my interactions with them, as it was her invitation to join nightlife activities that lead to my forming closer contacts with the rest of the group and many others at the German school. The way she included me and openly stated "Marie is one of us" provided essential opportunities for my work. Antonia, child of a Chinese-German marriage, was born in Germany, but grew up in Shanghai and has been going to the same school all her life—this is rare among expatriate children. She is a determined, smart young woman, who has high expectations for herself and highly values intelligence and analytical minds. Other students sometimes seem to find her active and passionate participation in discussions in the classroom annoying. Antonia and I have gotten along well from the beginning and, with her generous, independent, and opin-

7 These friendships were obviously based on gender, something I had already observed when looking at the seating arrangement in the classroom. This was apparently the case in both of the eleventh grade classes at the German school I visited. Peter, one of the students, once commented on the classroom division during an interview: "Like in prison, women and men separate." Although this division was abandoned by the senior year, gender played a crucial role in the expatriate teenagers' friendships and, consequently, in my interactions with them. I often wondered about the implications of my own gender on my relationships and my overall research. While I felt that being female was beneficial to my more intimate, sometimes friendship-like interactions with the girls, I often experienced it as an obstacle (at least in the beginning) when I interacted with the boys. Niobe Way (2004, 173) and his research group inquiring adolescent boys' experiences and concepts of friendship, however, found over the course of their project that many boys preferred female interviewers.

ionated ways, she forms a key figure in my research. Mia, an ambitious and eloquent girl, and her artistic friend Kressi, are the youngest members of the group because they have both skipped a grade. They are new to the class and at first not allowed to go out as often as the others. Over the course of the school year, however, they do become permanent members of the group. Mia has a typical expat biography and has moved several times in her life. Kressi, in contrast, moved to Shanghai at an early age. She was born in Germany to Vietnamese parents with Cantonese roots and seems to have family all over the world. Charlie, born in Germany to Chinese parents and very much liked by everyone at school due to her friendly ways, and Olivia from Belgium, admired for her beauty, arrange and participate in group activities on a regular basis. Andrea, the only one of the girls attending another class, is one of the few students who lives downtown. Andrea is a quirky, creative student who likes to make people laugh and has a particular reputation for partying—especially dancing—Shanghai's nights away with Antonia.

I am lucky to have met this group and am happy to accompany them to various activities. When, for instance, in the beginning of May, the geography teacher invites me to join his class for an excursion, I arrange with "the girls" (without Charlie, who is in a different class) to join their group. The students are supposed to do photo walks through different parts of Shanghai to document elements of globalization. I meet the teacher and students at 3 p.m. at school. Andrea, Antonia, and Mia greet me when I arrive just on time and inform me that we will pick up Kressi and Olivia at home on our way downtown. However, one group only consists of two students and the teacher asks me to join them, as there has to be a minimum of three in each group for safety reasons. The girls protest. Luckily, another student shows up and I can stay in "my" group. Antonia's driver is waiting outside to take us. The girls have chosen the area of Tianzifang, a block of old Shanghainese lane houses that have been turned into small shops, cafés, and restaurants. I am glad to hang out with the girls who I know best, particularly as I had had a rough night due to food poisoning. I am also glad to join in on some expatriate luxury and hop into the big, air-conditioned van instead of the crowded metro.

We drive to two different compounds to pick up Olivia and Kressi. Although I had been to several expatriate family homes for my research on "trailing spouses" in 2007, it is the first time I really see how these two students live. Big villas surrounded by green spaces and high walls. The girls, who are naturally not startled by their friends' houses, discuss Olivia's romantic situation. Somehow, maybe due to my presence, the discussion shifts all of a sudden to foreign languages and language proficiency. Antonia shares a story from the last MUN (Model United Nations)[8] conference,

8 MUN, Model United Nations, is a simulation of the United Nations where students critically engage with global issues. After researching and discussing current topics, the students present different (national) positions on these issues

where she met a Korean girl who grew up in Germany and England. This girl had offered to speak German with Antonia, in case English was too difficult for her. Remembering this girl's comment, Antonia becomes furious and all the girls join in. Everybody sees this remark as extremely insulting. This protest is not only a form of friendly support but is also justified, as Antonia's English is quite flawless. However, sitting among them on the back seat of the van, I silently consider how the Korean girl's comment also indirectly implies that they lack certain cosmopolitan competencies, thus calling for communal critique. Andrea's quick-witted input is requested and she contemplates aloud what the right response to such an insulting and deprecatory remark might be. We further discuss the topic of language skills and everyone shares stories about children in their community who grew up bilingually. Olivia, who speaks Flemish at home, tells us that she only learned German in fifth grade. Antonia feels she speaks neither German nor Chinese very well. Andrea shares how she gave up studying Chinese, to be immediately criticized by Antonia for it. One should expect that, after so many years in Shanghai, they should be able to speak Chinese, Antonia declares, but that they cannot because they are content to "live in the expat bubble." I notice that the bubble metaphor seems omnipresent among expatriates in Shanghai—Paul, for instance, whose story I told in the introduction, also used it. I wonder if my presence triggers such remarks. Andrea talks about the difficulties of learning Chinese. I share that, although I have taken numerous evening classes in Chinese and just resumed taking lessons a few weeks ago, I myself am also far from going beyond simple everyday topics.

The girls plan a *Lord of the Rings* night and discuss what kind of (German) candies their parents should buy. Antonia says that in no way could she send her mom shopping. She has no time for that, between owning three companies and never sleeping for more than five hours a night. Even her dad, who is a general manager, has more time. I silently guess that their *ayi* does all the grocery shopping.[9] Upon asking about a classmate of theirs, I accidently trigger several stories about different students and couples and feel like a whole world of gossip opens up. Who is wearing inappropriate clothes or has ended relationships in inappropriate ways, who is simply using girls, who is surprisingly getting along with whom, and who is "setting back emancipation for at least 200 years," among other topics, arise. In between all this gossip, the subject of conversation turns to me and my boyfriend, whom they met at a concert, and my former rela-

through role-playing. The majority of the international schools in Shanghai held Model UN classes. At the German school in Shanghai, a Model UN class was offered as an extracurricular activity. Some students also took part in conferences in Europe. Such high school and university-level conferences take place all over the world.

9 The Chinese term *ayi* here means "nanny" or "household help." The term *ayi*, however, can also refer to a maternal aunt and is considered a polite way for children to address women in general.

tionships and why they ended. Fieldwork means sharing. This gossip about acquaintances and first romances, as well as school grades, language skills, and career ambitions is common among the girls. On the one hand, the moral implications of listening or even participating in gossip demanded constant reflection about my role and obligations as a researcher and remained difficult for me throughout my fieldwork. On the other hand, gossip was an important element that enabled me to gain information about the students' daily lives—see Marie Gillespie's (1999) work on how gossip about soap operas among South Asian youth in London is linked to negotiating their own social networks—as well as to maintain the ongoing process of social access (Carmel 2011, 552).

After all the gossip, Andrea laughs and wonders what I must be writing about them. I sigh and tell them that I honestly do not know and that I sometimes feel they could write it better themselves. They protest and encourage me. While I am often tremendously worried about my research subjects reading my writing, this is one of the rewarding moments of working with students who are truly interested in and supportive of my work.

Meanwhile, the interaction with the Chinese driver employed by Antonia's family is limited to navigating him to the right compounds and the girls' houses. He is apparently presumed to know the way to the Tianzifang complex. When, almost an hour later, he shouts "Dao le!" ("We're here!"), all of the girls cry out that this cannot be true. We note that we ended up in Taicang Road instead of Taikang Road. The driver, without commenting and apparently used to hectic shouting and complaints—maybe even to foreigners' mispronunciations of Chinese street names—drives on and brings us to the desired destination. I get out last and am the only one to say goodbye to the driver. Antonia apologizes to everyone for her driver bringing us to the wrong location at first. No one seems to notice.

When we arrive, we head towards a café known for its delicious milkshakes, called Kommune, which offers outdoor seating in the midst of small alleys and, like all coffee shops in Tianzifang, has prices for an expat income rather than the average Shanghainese. Here, a milkshake costs around RMB 38 (€4.18).[10] On the way there, Mia, Kressi, and Olivia take photos. I take photos of them taking photos, but as we all have a research agenda today, it feels okay. Drinking milkshakes, chatting, and taking pictures keeps us entertained for a while. Mia and Kressi buy some of the cafe's well-designed drinking glasses for their own rooms. We then leave to explore the area further with our cameras. We look at a stall offering earrings and Olivia, who always wears big earrings, buys a pair. We then stop at a piercing and tattoo studio.

Antonia flips through a folder full of tattoo images. She already has a small tattoo on her neck and is now looking for a nice image of a salamander for a second tattoo. She remembers how she discovered the best

10 According to the currency converter Oanda, the average exchange rate between August 1st 2010 and August 1st 2011 was 1 RMB to €0.11.

image so far at a place close to Olivia's home in Belgium. She does not find one she likes in this studio's catalogue, but shares that it is probably wiser to wait until she turns eighteen anyway, so that her parents cannot object. The girls discuss the ideal placement of tattoos and Andrea shares that her aunt in Germany runs a tattoo studio, stressing that she does not do the tattoos herself, anymore, but that she manages the store. I note that it seems important to stress her aunt's higher position in the business. We pass a store with ethnic clothing that I like and, in the next store, I spot a pair of trousers. Mia then takes a photo of them so I can eventually get a pair made in the same style, as this pair is too expensive for me. We stroll along the lanes, window-shopping, enjoying the shared practices of "doing fashion" (Liechty 2003); buying, trying on, or talking about clothes. These topics are familiar to me and I easily join their conversations.

All the while, the students take pictures for the photo documentation project on globalization. Their research project allows me to feel comfortable with my own research agenda. This is not the norm. Being with them sometimes feels a lot like being with friends, while at other moments my academic agenda becomes central again and my role shifts. One night, for example, when we were cooking together at Kressi's house and getting ready to go to a club downtown, I felt very much like a part of the group. Then the girls started to discuss outfits and Olivia mentioned her Louboutins (infamously high-heeled designer shoes) and everything changed. My facial expression must have revealed my inner surprise at her having such expensive stilettos at the age of sixteen. Antonia asked what I was thinking about and whether I had found something to write about. I felt a little embarrassed, as I was discovered again as the researcher, but then admitted what had shocked me. Revealing my thoughts, the girls all started laughing, leaving me confused for a moment until they all shouted that these shoes were of course only copies from one of Shanghai's many "fake markets." I realized, in that moment, that my shifting from friend to researcher, though not easy for me, was okay with "the girls." They always met my research project with interest and continuously asked me about my latest writings, findings, and ideas. While certain intimate topics gave me the feeling of having passed a threshold towards trust and acceptance, other topics were obviously triggered by my mere presence and research questions. The discussions about language skills, nationalities, and the "expatriate bubble" on the way to Tianzifang, for instance, are in strong relation to my research themes as the girls understand them. Nonetheless, these topics do not seem new to them, but seem to have been discussed many times before. Thus it is often the apparent routineness of certain conversational themes that leads me to conclude that these issues are important to them.

We step into a small shop selling knickknacks and Olivia starts talking about her situation with her ex-boyfriend who is leaving Shanghai. They have just separated and the girls wonder if she should still give him the present she has prepared for him—a slideshow with pictures of their time

in Shanghai, accompanied by "their" songs. The girls suggest she should simply ask him if he still wants it. I silently think about the difficulties of first romantic relationships that are constantly in danger of being torn apart by parental decisions to move on. The girls, on the contrary, seem quite pragmatic.

We move on, stroll through a boutique selling leather bags, and another offering all kinds of hats. Finally, we all sit down on the pavement, exhausted from all the impressions surrounding us. I take a few pictures. The girls talk about their prom next year and their ideas for a talent night that they want to propose for the next term. We then hop into a cab to meet the rest of their class and the teacher for dinner, a discussion of the excursion, and the exchange of photos at an American diner.

3.2 Fieldwork with "the boys:" repulsive moments and aesthetic jellyfish

In the beginning, the all-boys group included Bjorn, Alex, Peter, Don, Marco, and Giovanni. They were later joined by Bjorn's brother and two students from the grade below. When I first interacted with them at school, I was, for some reason, a little bit intimidated, particularly by Alex, who is the oldest in class and who I had seen become angry at a fellow student. However, during the first interview with him, Bjorn, and Don, I find them all to be quite nice and eager to share their viewpoints. They are smoking heavily during the interview and particularly like to showcase their night-life experiences. Alex, even until the end of my fieldwork stay, sometimes accidently uses the German polite form "Sie" to address me and our relationship remains distant, albeit friendly. Although I have never conducted a follow-up interview with Don, I have had several casual conversations with him. Bjorn and I have become closer over the months, mainly through sharing music, since we both like the same reggae artists. I conduct two individual follow-up interviews with him. The beginning of my relationship with Peter and Marco is different. We talk outside of school, at the club Mural, before I hold their initial interviews. These two boys are in a different class from the one I regularly visit. Besides a long first interview with the two of them, I conduct a follow-up interview with Peter alone in June 2012. Giovanni, although we have interacted before, is first interviewed during my short stay in September 2011 and again in June 2012. All the boys are self-reflective and interesting to talk to. They classify themselves as the peer group that goes out, drinks, consumes cannabis, feels that school is not the most important thing in life, and highly values people who are equally cool, relaxed, or—as they put it—"chilled."

These two groups I accompany, who label each other as "the boys" or "the girls" respectively, sometimes unite their nightlife activities. Occasionally exploring the boys' nightlife activities in the spring of 2011, without "the girls" with whom I have already built a stronger relationship, feels

strange at first. Nonetheless, I soon enjoy accompanying "the boys" to the club Mural on Friday nights. Over weeks of joining them at school, sharing dinner, partying, and discussing their lives with them, I feel increasingly comfortable around them and find their company and outlook on life enjoyable. But just when I get to this point of ease in our interaction, we come to the last time I go out with them before I have to leave Shanghai in July 2011. The school year has ended.

That summer night in July, the boys and girls at first hang out together at Mural, before the girls move on to a different club. I decide to stay behind with the boys and step outside to get some air and to see what is going on. The boys discuss going to another club called Shelter. But standing outside, talking about music, location, and the like, everyone seems to be waiting for something. Listening to the ongoing conversations, I begin to understand that a decision about the next location cannot be made without Alex, who has disappeared with a Chinese girl in the back alley. Bjorn's brother, who joined the group recently, goes back and keeps some of the boys up to date on what is going on. I start feeling uncomfortable and I am unsure of how to behave. Are the boys bragging or joking? What is really happening back there? While I am trying to figure out my own position on the matter, an extremely drunk Chinese girl appears on the scene. Staggering on her high heels she finally opts to sit down on the stairs. I watch her as she leans back against Matthias who has come along this night and happened to sit on the stairs. Matthias, who used to be in a band with Paul—whose story I told in the introduction—and who has been extremely helpful by introducing me to students from other schools, only entered the 11th grade recently. The Chinese girl leaning back against Matthias provokes much amusement among the group. The boys joke and tease Matthias. The funny conversation and light amusement, however, suddenly change when one of the boys suggests peeing on the girl. Thinking this is a joke, I am startled when the others join in the conversation by suggesting different angles from which to undertake this disgusting and humiliating act. Shocked at this behavior by the boys whom I considered to be so mature, I intervene and openly state that I am disgusted by the idea and that I will not allow it to happen. I leave to get water and coke for everyone, telling them that they apparently need to sober up. While giving a bottle of water to the Chinese girl, I start talking to her. I try to learn her address and maneuver her toward a cab. She vomits. I then put her into a taxi and give the driver her address. Bjorn tells me off: I ruined all the fun, he says. I should stop acting like a social worker and will not be allowed to cite his interviews any longer. I know that, for the first time, I am stretching my boundaries from participating to interrupting.[11] I try to stay calm

11 In general, the boys' participation in activities such as alcohol and drug consumption and skipping school challenged my position, and occasionally caused me to worry. While I decided to accept the situation at hand and not interfere, there were a few occasions when I voiced my opinion to the teenagers and ensured that people got home safely or not did not get involved in behavior that would

and stick to my opinion. He finally asks me for a sip from my drink, which I offer him jokingly, under the condition that he lets me cite his interviews, again. He agrees; crisis averted. When Alex appears back on the scene, everyone applauds, I am too tired or too cowardly to try to figure out what actually happened and the whole group moves on to Shelter, another club. Some of the boys purchase marijuana at a street barbecue stall and we sit outside, waiting for the club to stop charging at 3 a.m. After dancing only for a bit, I soon leave for my apartment, still shocked to have seen such a different side of the boys. Is this typical “adolescent” behavior, I wonder? Is this the infamous “peer pressure?” What, if anything, does all of this have to do with racism? Do we have to understand such behavior or fantasies in the light of performances of masculinity?

Soon afterward, I pack these ambivalent thoughts along with all my belongings and leave for Germany. When I return to Shanghai for follow-up visits in September 2011 and June 2012, I have great discussions with all of the boys, again. However, the experience of that night remains in the forefront on my mind. During my last follow-up visit, graduation is immanent and everyone is reminiscing about the good times they have had in Shanghai. The troublesome night at Mural and Shelter comes up, too. Stories of other nights follow, about Marco falling asleep and the other boys forgetting him in front of a club, where he later woke up minus his phone and cash. Laughter accompanies these stories. Another anecdote is shared about how someone else fell asleep and one of them stuck his penis in the sleeper’s ear. Laughter again. I am startled again by the combination of tight friendships and, at the same time, brutal practices of teasing, mobbing, and physical harassment. I become particularly interested in these more brutal aspects and hierarchies during this last stay in the summer of 2012.

“The boys” regularly meet at Alex’s place. “The girls” are not allowed to come to these gatherings and even Kressi, who has since become Bjorn’s girlfriend, has called these regular gatherings “exclusive,” so I think it impossible to join. After an interview with Peter, however, he offers to contact Alex, Bjorn, and Don to ask when they have time to record another interview. While downtown for an interview with Andrea, Peter texts me, saying I should join the other boys at an Indian restaurant in the outskirts of the city and conduct the interview there. However, it is almost an hour drive and it is impossible for me to make it on time. After texting back

---

be harmful to others. However, as I never involved parents or teachers, the relationship of trust remained intact despite these interventions, and I continued to trust that students, between their abilities and intellects, as well as the rules imposed by their parents, could take care of themselves. The rules imposed by parents, such as curfews, differed among students. Occasionally, some teenagers stayed at friends’ houses overnight to avoid their own parents’ strict rules. In general, clubs in Shanghai do not enforce any age-based restrictions on club entry or alcohol sales. See Chapter 2 of Part IV on nightlife practices for more details.

and forth, we agree that Peter and I will join them later, at Alex's parents' house. I am excited to join them at last for their ritual boys' evening.

At 10 p.m. I am waiting for Peter in front of a Lianhua supermarket close to the compound gate. He calls and arranges for Bjorn's brother to pick me up on his scooter. He pulls up a few minutes later, I jump on, and we ride through the dark, through the shiny new and empty lanes of the compound, passing well-trimmed lawns and big villas. Mid-way I spot Peter, headphones on, cycling on his bike. After several turns, left and right, we arrive. I jump off and open the gate for the boys to drive inside.

I follow Peter and Bjorn's brother into the house via the terrace, through the huge living room, and upstairs, into Alex's room. Here, about ten boys are lying and sitting on the couch and the big bed, smoking, drinking beer, and watching a movie. A dog greets me and, in my insecure situation, not knowing what to do, I focus on the dog and start to pet it. The TV screen shows sharks tearing something or someone apart. Cuddling the dog to keep my eyes away from the screen, I panic at the thought of being stuck watching a horror movie with a bunch of drunken and stoned teenage boys. Trying to calm myself—how grateful I am to the dog!—I soon realize, to my surprise, that we are only watching *Deep Blue*, a documentary on the earth's oceans based on very aesthetic film material that was shot for a BBC series.

Some of the guys step out onto the adjacent balcony to smoke marijuana and I get a spot on the couch between one of Antonia's friends—a former student at the school but, like me, a temporary guest of the group—and Giovanni. Antonia's friend curiously asks me why I am here or, as he rephrases it, who I came with. Simply shrugging my shoulders and mumbling something about my interview, I realize that my academic intention does not answer the question. Hardly any girls are allowed to join these gatherings and not all boys, either. When I then respond that Peter invited me, everything seems clear. No further questions asked. Peter, as I later found out in discussions with Bjorn and also some of the girls, is thought to be one of the heads of the group. He can therefore invite anyone, even me. I open a beer and try to grasp the overall mood. I realize that the interview is a stupid idea that night and decide that witnessing what is going on is more important than interrupting their "boys' night" rituals. I am startled at how relaxed (or perhaps stoned) everyone is, and how nicely they behave. Instead of the expected roughness and meanness, I find the boys lying next to each other on the bed, leaning against each other, almost hugging, watching a beautiful movie, and making loud remarks on the aesthetics of water plants and jellyfish. When the movie abruptly stops because only the first part has been downloaded, the boys want to put music on. Bjorn, Don, and Peter are calling for Antonín Dvořák's 9th symphony. The music is played at a high volume and everyone is asked to be quiet. Peter lies flat on his stomach on the bed with his head reaching over the end, nodding along with the rhythm. Bjorn moves his arms in a conductor's manner. It is a beautiful sight: ten rough boys, lying around humming along with the

melodies of Dvořák's "From the New World." They had discussed this piece for months in music class and now seem to love it. Alex expresses how he finds the oboe a beautiful instrument. An oboe solo, extremely moving indeed, has preceded his remark. After the symphony ends, two boys get ready to go get food from KFC.[12] The way in which Peter and Bjorn give them their orders allows the hierarchies to still shine through a little. We start to watch the movie *The Naked Gun 2½*. Bjorn laughs loudly at every joke. We stop the movie for some reason. The boys return with the food and some boys leave. A few of them have to go to school the next day. Giovanni also leaves. Peter enjoys his chicken wings. Don only talks about the news of the "Abistreich" cancellation (he received an email on his smart phone).[13] We watch a little more of *The Naked Gun 2½.* Peter and Don want to leave, so I opt to join them and we share a cab. I chip in 20 RMB, and they drop me off in front of the guesthouse that I am staying in.

I enjoy "the boys" company and their outlook on life, and am particularly intrigued by their ways because their behavior and relationships toward each other are less familiar to me than those of "the girls." At the same time, the group dynamics and their behavior trouble me and I am uncertain about what is performed for me and what is really going on in their lives. As I get to know them individually, however, I become more and more familiar and less intimidated by their ways as a group. At the same time, the moments spent with the group help me to better understand the gendered experiences of being an expat teen in Shanghai, as well as to follow their individual stories.

The next chapter focuses on these personal stories and introduces four individuals: two of them, Antonia and Bjorn, as my primary contacts for "the girls" and "the boys," Arnaud, as someone from a different school, and finally Xia, as someone who is less involved in activities outside of school.

12 Kentucky Fried Chicken, the American fast-food chain usually referred to as KFC, is gaining popularity in China.

13 The German "Abistreich" is a common ritual that high school students perform right after their final examinations. The ritual usually involves disrupting the school routine with numerous practical jokes, some of which involve ridiculing teachers.

CHAPTER 4
Meeting Individuals: Four Students' Narratives of the Self

> *Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a* positioning *(Hall 1990, 226, emphasis in the original).*

In the realm of postcolonial studies, many authors (see, among others, Bhabha 1994; Hall 1990; 1994; 1996; and 1997; Brah 1996) have pointed out how the cultural construction of (collective) identities plays an important role for people living in a diaspora or in other culturally complex environments. Similarly, my fieldwork and in-depth interviews with expatriate youths reveal that growing up "on the move" and in a transient space—despite all its privileges and opportunities—demands coping with constant changes and losses. The inherent questions of belonging and cultural identity are, to use Stuart Hall's expression, an ongoing and ever-changing process of "positioning."

The following mind map (Figure 2) was produced by the students Mia, Kressi, and Bjorn during Ethics class at a German school in December 2010 and allows for a good overview of their own complex ideas about identity.[14]

Their discussions, as the map illustrates, revolve around "Prägungen" (influences), such as "Erziehung" (education), "Freunde" (friends), "Kultur" (culture) or "Heimat" (home), as well as the idea of "eigenständige Entwicklung" (independent development). The students also discuss and agree on the "veränderbar" (changeable) nature of identity, for example "durch bestimmte Ereignisse" (through certain events) in life. Furthermore, the mind map shows that the students also consider how "viel nachdenken" (much contemplating) or "philosophieren" (philosophizing) can help one to find

14 The Ethics teacher had asked me, after a few days of observation, to participate in or help teach his class. I came up with the idea of discussing the topics of "identity" and "home" with students. Although the mind map project was designed out of the necessity to maintain social access to the Ethics class, it later proved very valuable. The teenagers were asked to exchange their ideas about what the terms "Identität" (identity) or "Heimat" (home) meant to them in written form, working in small groups of three or four. These discussions were conducted in silence, with students writing their ideas on two different large sheets of paper and commenting on each other's responses. The eight resulting mind maps highlight the students' self-reflective ways of thinking about moving. The written thoughts about "home" in particular proved insightful, and it thus became apparent that "home" is a term laden with many associations and emotions for these international youths. The issue of "home" and the relevant mind maps are discussed in detail in Part III, Chapter 2.



Figure 2. Mind Map on “Identität.” Drawing by three students.

one’s identity. Such ways of thinking about their own position in the world demonstrate the power of reflexivity that Anthony Giddens (1991) conceptualized as humans’ ways of forging “narratives of the self.”

The following four student portraits illustrate such “narratives or the self” and highlight expatriate students’ individual processes of cultural identity positioning. These narratives have to be seen in the context of fieldwork and the encounters between the students and myself out of which they emerged.[15] However, the students gave these accounts not

15 As Nigel Rapport (2000) points out, although not linking his concept to Giddens, narrative is both an individual’s creation of his or her own self and a fieldwork technique that provides the space for important stories of the individual’s own self to unfold. If we understand the self as “an ‘unfinished project’, continually subject to being rewritten,” it is the act of narration that holds it together (ibid., 76). “Narrative […] transforms the temporal and spatial fragmentariness of our lives, offering coherence: a sense that our lives may be, at every moment, at least partially integrated into an ongoing story” (ibid.). The narrative form thus “counteracts a sense of fragmentation, contingency, randomness [and] dislocation” (ibid.) and acts as a “modus vivendi,” a way of living, for “fieldworker and subject of study alike,” as both seek “a place cognitively to reside and make sense, a place to continue to be” in a moving world (ibid.). I experienced this in many conversations, interviews, and group discussions in which I shared such a space with the teenagers, while the informants were constantly aware that their narratives were becoming part of my anthropological endeavor and overall narrative. Writing this overall narrative in the form of this book also required reflection on my authority as author. This means that the decision to write about fieldwork situations in the present tense cannot merely be seen as a simple stylistic preference. Following the ongoing discussion on the so-called “ethnographic present” that began within the context of the writing culture debate of the 1980s (for an overview, see Hastrup 1990 and Pink 2009; Pink (2009) particularly comments on the implications of the ethnographic present on text-image relations), I understand

only to feed my story, but also to make sense of their own experiences and selves through narrative. As Nigel Rapport's (2000) approach highlights, it is through such "narrative constructions of past, present and future, of relations of sameness and difference," that the young people's "self is given content, is delineated and embodied" (ibid., 76). While all people go through such processes of negotiating their individual identities through narratives, the following four teenagers' discursive understandings of the self reveal that their identity practices are particularly shaped by their experiences with multiple moves. Their moves bring about various shifting points of reference and borders along or across which they must navigate to find their own position.

4.1 Antonia: I consider myself Shanghainese, but others see me as a foreigner

In December 2010, while I am nervously introducing my research project to the eleventh grade students at the German school, a girl in the back of the room suddenly suggests that, if I want to know more about expatriate youth culture, I should study nightlife. Indeed, in the coming days, this sixteen-year-old girl, Antonia, invites me to come along to a Friday night out at the club Mural. Antonia turns out to be a key "gate-opener" to leisure spaces and, over the course of my fieldwork often includes me in various group activities. I record a first group-interview with Antonia and her two friends Olivia and Charlie in January 2011. Later, two individual interviews follow: an extensive one in a downtown café in September 2011 and a brief one in her home in June 2012. We regularly spend time together during nightlife activities with "the girls," at dinners, or at school, and continue to meet after her move to Germany in the summer of 2012.

Antonia was born in Germany but grew up in Shanghai and, as mentioned previously, is one of the very few expat teenagers who have been at the same school all their lives. Her father is German, her mother a successful Chinese businesswoman who studied in Germany. Over the course of my fieldwork I came to know Antonia as a determined, smart young woman, who likes to feel she is in control of things and has high expecta-

---

that writing about fieldwork situations in the present tense has been criticized for locating the "other" in a different time frame from that of the narrator, consequently objectifying the "other." However, suggestions to reconceptualize the ethnographic present have been put forth by anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup (1990), among others. I agree that a reinvention may be useful and see the ethnographic present as a form of writing that highlights the continuous process of knowledge production, showing that fieldwork and writing are processual, selective, and subjective. I find that the present tense can also help the reader to understand the research situation and my perspective as a researcher in greater depth. The past tense, in contrast, would have communicated temporal differences between "being there" and my writing phase more clearly, but at the same time, would have evoked a false finality and authority on the insights produced.

tions for herself. She enjoys discussions and is known to other students for her vigorous debating skills, as well as for her generosity. Antonia herself often stresses how different she is from other expatriate children who only spend a few years in Shanghai.

Sitting outside in a downtown café in early September 2011, as we are trying to converse despite Shanghai's street noises, Antonia tells me that she only knows Germany from holidays and reflects upon her recent stay in Europe four weeks prior to the interview.

> ANTONIA: *When I come to Germany, I have to get used to it. Every time. What I also find annoying in Germany are things like inviting people, like, they take the bill, "well, you have to pay 4.20." But I don't have twenty cents right then. Things like that. That's much more relaxed with my friends here.*[16]

It is Chinese custom to invite your friends and pay for everyone. Antonia and her friends sometimes also share the cost of eating out or going for a drink, but she finds practices in Germany, such as splitting the bill, particularly pedantic. Antonia generally distances herself from such cultural practices that she considers typically German and describes many incidents in Germany that she has found rather alienating. In the interview that we recorded in June 2012, Antonia also voices her concern about her upcoming move to Germany and her anxieties about being able to fit in.

While not considering herself "really German," she also talks about the experience of being perceived as a foreigner in Shanghai.

> ANTONIA: *Others see me as a foreigner. They are nonetheless very nice to me, but somehow, they always see me as this exotic animal. <L> Oh! A foreigner who can speak Chinese well! It's like that. [...] Well, not always. It's not that I am being excluded or anything. But, you're not really a part of Chinese society.*[17]

Antonia speaks Chinese at home with her grandmother and her *ayi*. In the interview quote above she, nevertheless, describes how impossible it is to be "Chinese," as she is constantly labeled as a "foreigner" or an "exotic animal" by Chinese citizens, such as the local university students she occasionally converses with in nightlife settings. Antonia's life seems to oscil-

16 German original: ANTONIA: *Wenn ich nach Deutschland komme, muss ich mich dran gewöhnen. Immer. Was mich auch immer nervt in Deutschland ist so Sachen wie mit dem Einladen, wie, die nehmen dann die Rechnung, „ja, du musst 4,20 zahlen." So, ich hab gerade keine zwanzig Cent. Solche Sachen. Da ist das hier bei meinen Freunden viel entspannter.*

17 German original: ANTONIA: *Andere sehen mich als Ausländerin. Die sind dann zwar total freundlich zu mir. Aber halt irgendwie. Die sehen mich immer wie so ein exotisches Tier. <L> Oh! Eine Ausländerin die gut Chinesisch kann! Das ist so. [...] Also nicht immer. Nicht dass ich ausgeschlossen werde oder so. Aber, man ist nicht wirklich ein Teil der chinesischen Gesellschaft.*

late between two defining poles, "German" and "Chinese." Between having a German passport and receiving a German school education, while having spent the last fourteen years in Shanghai, Antonia—along with other individuals in her life—finds that both models of cultural identity are contestable and neither seems to fit her. Furthermore, being a child of a mixed marriage and speaking both languages at home also means that difference is also present in the intimacy of the domestic sphere.[18] Family life therefore does not offer a clear point of reference with which to position herself, either.

When we discuss the expatriate lifestyle in Shanghai, Antonia shares how she sees herself as part of the expatriate collective:

> ANTONIA: *Actually I am also in the expat bubble. Maybe a little less than others. But I am in it anyway.*[19]

Antonia addresses the exclusion of Chinese locals by using the term "bubble" to describe expatriate life, a metaphor that was also used by Paul, whose experiences I laid out in the introduction. She simultaneously attributes a sense of community to her "expat bubble,"[20] as well as being different from not only German but also Chinese society, which she particularly notices upon every return to Shanghai after holidays in Germany.

> ANTONIA: *I do notice that it is a different group of people. Although they are partly Chinese, partly Germans who've spent almost their whole life in Germany, somehow you change here. Because it's really a different group of people. As if it's a different nationality.*[21]

---

18 Michael Anderson (1999), who analyzes the experiences of children from bicultural marriages in Athens, Greece, illustrates how different and sometimes rivaling cultural ideas of child-rearing have to be managed in the home. Based on ethnographic material from British-Greek families, Anderson highlights the intra-familial "edges [such as] language, the body and certain aspects of social protocol" (ibid., 18) in which parents or extended family experience and express their specific Greekness or Britishness with respect to their children. Examining the ways those children dealt with differences within the family, Anderson concludes that they "generate their own conceptual spaces and identities 'in-between' culturally differentiated adult thoughts and actions through certain identificatory media and thereby affect not merely a role of cultural brokering but hybridized identities in their own right" (ibid., 13).

19 German original: ANTONIA: *Ich bin eigentlich auch in der Expatbubble. Vielleicht ein bisschen weniger als andere. Aber ich bin es auf jeden Fall.*

20 I will discuss this aspect of demarcation, or "the bubble," throughout this ethnography, particularly in Part III, Chapter 2.1 on gated communities, in Part III, Chapter 3.3, on the idea of expatriateness communicated and lived in the international schools, and again in Part IV, Chapter 4, when addressing the students' views on their lack of contact with local Chinese society.

21 German original: ANTONIA: *Ich merke schon, das ist eine andere Gruppe von Menschen. Obwohl das so, teilweise Chinesen sind, teilweise Deutsche die fast ihr ganzes Leben in Deutschland gelebt haben, irgendwie, man verändert sich hier. Denn es ist wirklich eine andere Gruppe von Menschen. Als wär es eine andere Nationalität.*

While she does not consider herself to be an integral part of the "expatriate bubble," i.e. an isolated world of foreigners mingling in Shanghai that excludes locals, a new form of cultural identity emerges from the mixture of "Germanness" and "Chineseness" that creates her subjective experience of Shanghai—an expatriate community that is almost a "different nationality." She sees this community to which she feels she belongs as an amalgamation, a perspective that she also applies to herself. It is this perspective that I conceptualize as transcultural. As I argue in the introduction of this book, such a transcultural perspective can shed light on the act of shifting and merging different cultural practices and positions to create new subjectivities. It can also enlighten moments of boundary-drawing and practices of making distinctions.

During our interviews, Antonia looks at the different influences on her life and tries to grasp and narrate them from just such a perspective, to demonstrate that she feels uncomfortable positioning herself as being either "German" or "Chinese." Instead of simply making "expatriate" (or, similarly, "Third Culture Kid") her main identity reference, she strategically claims a hybrid form of urban citizenship to express her narrative of the self: "I consider myself Shanghainese." This positioning is not about rejecting being Chinese, German, or expat, but about embracing all these points of references in its amalgamated state. This is of course her subjective positioning and does not necessarily reflect the common discourse of being Shanghainese (*shanghairen*), which, despite the idea of migration and Westernization making up much of the discourse on Shanghai's specific culture (*haipai*) (Farrer 2002, 88–92), is usually tied to being born in Shanghai, speaking Shanghainese, and having a Shanghai residence permit (*hukou*) (see Schoon 2007). As Antonia points out, the Chinese locals might not accept her self-identification as Shanghainese.

While drinking coffee and gazing at the passing cars, bikes, bicycles, and pedestrians on Hengshan Road, Antonia explains her close relationship to the city:

> ANTONIA: *In my head Shanghai is always, I don't know, this host of many things, just all these impressions, the whole time. […] It makes me totally hyper—every time I'm in the city of Shanghai, in this area. […] When I came back [from Germany] to Shanghai I went shopping with my friend, but we didn't even get to the shopping part. We had something to eat and simply walked through one street and were full of energy and happy to be in Shanghai again. […] As soon as I am in the city, or take a taxi from club to club, or go shopping… I am just, I get… Well, it doesn't seem like "Oh my God so much stuff," but rather as if I had more energy.*[22]

22 German original: ANTONIA: *Shanghai ist in meinem Kopf für mich immer so. Ich weiß nicht. So ein Haufen von vielem einfach. Einfach so, ganz viele Eindrücke die ganze Zeit. […] Mich macht das voll hyper. Immer wenn ich sofort in der Stadt von*

Antonia speaks enthusiastically about exploring Shanghai and experiencing the urban environment. The city provides a host of impressions that energize her. Antonia feels that Shanghai is her home (see Part II, Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion). To her, the urban experience of living in Shanghai is a point of identity reference that bridges the various differences in her life because, to her, the city includes all of them.

Antonia's story shows, in the words of Stuart Hall (1990, 227), that "the boundaries of difference are continually repositioned in relation to different points of reference." While Antonia stresses her ways of bridging the boundaries between German, Chinese, and expatriate circles that she experiences as being tied to certain cultural practices and processes of labeling, Bjorn, the next student I present, positions himself as someone who must come to grips with the class boundaries that emerged following his family's move to Shanghai.

4.2 Bjorn: Shanghai is the best thing that can happen to you, if you're a villager

While sitting in class and listening to the teachers and students, the first thing I particularly notice about Bjorn is his rolling "r," a hint at his Bavarian background. Bjorn is sixteen years old when I first meet him at the German school in December 2010, and has only been in Shanghai since the beginning of the school year a few months earlier, when his father's job posting forced his family to relocate. He had never lived outside the small village that he grew up in and, during an early group interview with two other boys, Don and Alex, he shares that he was initially against his parents' move to China.

After December 2010, I regularly meet Bjorn at school, and during nightlife activities or school outings, where we chat or listen to reggae music on one of our MP3 players. Bjorn is particularly familiar with German reggae artists, German popular culture, and cultural practices among youths outside the expatriate community. We regularly exchange reggae music and also bond over our common experience of having grown up in a small German village, where social class differences seemed non-existent to us as children. I observe how Bjorn quickly establishes friendships with his new classmates and becomes part of the group that I come to label as "the boys." Nonetheless, in June 2012, one and a half years after our first interview, he shares in retrospect that finding out "which friends suit me

---

Shanghai bin, so in diesen Gegenden. […] Also als ich zurück [aus Deutschland] in Shanghai war, war ich mit meiner Freundin shoppen und wir sind gar nicht zum Einkaufen gegangen, gekommen. Wir waren essen und sind einfach nur durch eine Straße gelaufen und waren aufgedreht und froh wieder in Shanghai zu sein. […] Sobald ich in die Stadt komme und in der Stadt bin, oder mit dem Taxi fahre von Club zu Club oder shoppen gehe … Ich bin einfach, ich wird … Also es kommt mir nicht so vor „oh Gott viel Zeug," sondern dann so eher, als hätte ich mehr Energie.

best" has been difficult. Still, Bjorn seems to be the link between the two gendered peer groups in his class by interacting with both "the girls" and "the boys." Because I spend much more time with "the girls," it is perhaps unsurprising that Bjorn is one of the boys I feel most comfortable talking to and who becomes one of my key male informants over the course of my fieldwork.

Throughout our many conversations, it becomes clear that, Bjorn's narratives of the self (Giddens 1991) position him as someone who must come to grips with the move from a rural area with a narrow social demographic to an urban, culturally-diverse area in general, and with new social class distinctions in particular. In contrast to many of his classmates, Bjorn has just experienced his first move abroad and sometimes feels uncomfortable with the expatriate lifestyle. The move to Shanghai brought with it a certain awareness of differences in financial means and social class. He often describes his life in Germany and contrasts it to his new social circle in Shanghai. During my time in Shanghai, he often states his preferences for places like the shop (see Part IV, Chapter 3) to high-end bars and occasionally voices his annoyance about everyone in Shanghai wanting the "high life" and how he misses "acting a bit antisocial" (bisschen asozial Getue).[23] In June 2012, as we are sitting at the French café next to his school discussing what being an expat actually means, he illustrates his view:

> BJORN: *Expat. Expat is a little like the senator status at Lufthansa. You are treated better. If you're a senator or a first class passenger at Lufthansa for instance, you get, for example, into this Lufthansa Lounge and you don't sit with all the others, the somehow ordinary, down there on these nasty seats. Instead, you are sitting on a massage chair, drinking your drink, eating a little caviar. That's being an expat. Being an expat is: "What does your daddy do?" "He does this and that." "Well, and what do you do here?" "I drink up all the money that my dad earns." That's an expat.*[24]

Bjorn, by exaggerating the comforts offered by an expatriate lifestyle, emphasizes the issue of class that preoccupies him. He chooses the metaphor of flying first class to describe his expatriate life, a metaphor that, for him, is tied to class-consciousness and distinctions from the "ordinary."

---

23 See Part III, Chapter 3.3, "Learning and Living Expatriateness," for a detailed discussion of Bjorn's quote.

24 German original: BJORN: *Expat. Expat ist wie so ein bisschen Senator-Status bei Lufthansa. Man wird besser behandelt einfach. Wenn du Senator oder first class zum Beispiel bei Lufthansa bist oder so, dann kommst du zum Beispiel in diese Lufthansa-Lounge und hockst nicht mit allen anderen, den normalen irgendwie, da unten auf diesen ekligen Sesseln. Sondern hockst auf deinem Massage-Stuhl, trinkst da deinen Drink noch mal, isst noch ein bisschen Kaviar. So ist Expat sein. Expat sein ist: „Ja, was macht dein Daddy?" „Ja, der arbeitet das und das." „Ja, und was machst du hier?" „Ich vertrink eigentlich nur das Geld, das mein Papa verdient." Das ist Expat.*

Bjorn highlights the practice of making distinctions that anthropologist Jacqueline Knörr (2005) has likewise found underlying the concept of TCKs and which led her to criticize TCK identity as being an unproductive means of coping with the migration experience. Knörr, based on her study of German expatriate youths who lived in Africa, argues:

> Creating a "TCK" world and ideology of difference as a result of having been brought up in an expatriate environment may well not be primarily a sign of actual third-culturedness, but of a transformation of an expatriate ideology of "natural superiority" over the local African population to a "TCK" ideology of "cultural superiority" over the "ordinary" local German population—a transformation, which neither supports a child's (re-)integration nor its further personal development (Knörr 2005, 75).

The expatriate youths I accompanied constantly experienced how a high social standing is attributed to them due to their financial means in comparison to the local living standard, their private and international education, their many travels, and their multi-lingualism. Everybody believes they will be the makers of the future, whether this is emphasized in the MUN (Model United Nations)—where students critically engage with global issues—or in the school headmaster's and German consul's graduation speech (see Part V, Chapter 1).

It is thus tempting for these teenagers, as Knörr describes above, to feel superior to locals, whether in the "host" or "home" country. The TCK ideology (here, again, I agree with Knörr) channels this superiority and gives it a form of expression which helps to maintain such feelings. The TCK concept seems to leave insufficient room for reflection and often rather surfaces as a form of TCK nationalism that claims hybridity for their own TCK nationals while also essentializing others.

Although his account might be prompted in part by a desire to downplay his privileged position through self-stigmatizing, Bjorn self-reflectively contemplates and comments on the issue of status in his life, instead of using his privileged lifestyle as a major identity source. The borders he experiences between his friends in Shanghai and in Germany might be difficult to bridge, but the awareness of class is something expatriate life has taught him.

To me, comparing expatriate life to flying first class also offers another interpretation: flying can be seen as symbolic of viewing the world from above, of both observing and crossing borders. It is this disturbing class-consciousness, this awareness of his advantages—which he nevertheless deeply enjoys—that mark Bjorn's Shanghai experience. While feeling uncomfortable with the luxury and privilege his new life brings, he simultaneously enjoys these benefits and considers his stay a positive experience. Bjorn is also aware of how his new experience has changed his outlook, his ideas about the future, and his confidence about what might be possible for him to achieve.

BJORN: *Shanghai's the best thing that can happen to you, if you're a villager. You're opened up to everything. Also to opinions. You are not stuck.*[25]

He labels himself (or his pre-Shanghai-self) a villager (Dorfmensch) who learned both new ways to live life and new possibilities after moving to the metropolis. In contrast to his peers at school, Bjorn never talks about negotiating his cultural identity in terms of questioning his "Germanness." This might be due to his upbringing in a single village in Bavaria. In contrast to the other students, the move to Shanghai has been the only one in his life. It is rather the differences between rural and urban, and the status and class consciousness, which came with the experience of moving, that startle and unsettle him.

When it comes to ways of coping with this experience of class distinction and the privileged expatriate lifestyle, Bjorn—besides gaining a reflective perspective—develops plans to counterbalance this experience by having "a few challenges." During our last interview in June 2012, just after his graduation, Bjorn tells me about his plans to study in Europe (outside Germany) starting the following year. He first wants to stay in Shanghai and take a Chinese language course with his girlfriend Kressi. Bjorn explains that he particularly dreams of making it on his own, without the help of his parents and their networks. His parents suggested sending him for a few months to Peru where he could live with a German family they know from Shanghai and intern at a German consulate.

BJORN: *I can live with them for free and work at the consulate. That would be it. I'd arrive there and would already have everything made, somehow. But that's actually not what I want. That's why I also don't want to study in Germany, because looking for an apartment will always be easy, because you can speak German. I actually like to have a few challenges. When I get it, I want to be able to say, it wasn't that easy, but now I got it. Now everything is good. And not like, I arrive, the apartment has long been rented over the Internet, I only walk in, furniture is already there, because my mom has organized everything for me. I'd find that boring. [...] [The stay in Peru] would be ready-made, really.*[26]

---

25 German original: BJORN: *Shanghai ist schon das Beste was einem passieren kann, wenn man ein Dorfmensch ist. Man öffnet sich so zu allem. Zu Meinungen auch. Man ist nicht festgefahren.*

26 German original: BJORN: *Ich kann bei denen wohnen umsonst, kann beim Konsulat arbeiten. Das wär schon alles. Ich käme dahin und hätte ein fertig gemachtes Nest irgendwie. Aber das ist eigentlich das, was ich nicht will. Deswegen will ich auch nicht in Deutschland studieren, weil da ist das mit Wohnungssuche immer leicht, weil da kann man Deutsch reden. Ich möchte es eigentlich mit ein bisschen trouble haben. [...] Wenn ich das hab möcht ich sagen können, ja war nicht so leicht, aber jetzt hab ich's. Jetzt ist gut. Und nicht so, ja, ich komm dahin, die Wohnung ist schon lange*

This quote again reveals how Bjorn processes his experiences of class consciousness and class difference that create one aspect of the expatriate community. His example of renting a furnished apartment via the Internet is reminiscent of expatriate packages which include services to help with renting furnished villas in Shanghai. Bjorn is looking for ways to "earn" his privileges in the future or to be treated the same way as people of a lower social standing. Having met people from many different places, he wants to continue an international education to keep broadening his perspective, but plans to do so by what he calls choosing a path "with a little trouble."

While expatriate student Bjorn is coping with the borders of class between his friends in Germany and his friends in Shanghai, another student, Arnaud, is dealing with the messy negotiations of differences within the intimate sphere of the family and with his own in-between position.

4.3 Arnaud: When you are in-between, you can't be the best at anything

When I first meet Arnaud in June 2011, he is sixteen years old and enrolled at a French school in Shanghai. Arnaud has been introduced to me by the German school student Matthias, whom I have mentioned previously. The two know each other from jam sessions in the music room on the German-French school campus. After exchanging several text messages, Arnaud and I agree to meet downtown, at a Starbucks coffee shop on Hengshan Road. When Arnaud, with his long black hair tied back into a ponytail, his jeans, sneakers, and the obligatory headphones, shows up for the interview, I immediately like his polite and careful way of studying and answering the interview questions.

Arnaud's Chinese parents immigrated to Belgium for his father's studies and career. Arnaud was born in Belgium and is a Belgian national. After his birth, his family moved to the outskirts of Paris, where they lived until Arnaud was nine years old, at which point his family decided to move to Shanghai for a career opportunity for his father, and to be closer to a sick grandparent.

Sitting opposite me and carefully sipping his orange juice at our little corner table, Arnaud recounts his everyday routines. He particularly enjoys talking about his band, theater, and current writing projects. When discussing his moving experiences and his growing up in France and Shanghai, he comments on one aspect of his migration story that he finds difficult to cope with: the influence of his first years in France and his French education on his relationship with his parents, particularly his mother:

---

gemietet über Internet, ich geh da jetzt nur noch rein, die Möbel stehen schon da, weil das meine Mama für mich gemacht hat. Das fände ich halt langweilig. […] [Der Aufenthalt in Peru] wär ein fertig gemachtes Nest, wirklich.

ARNAUD: *My parents are Chinese Chinese. They don't have, they didn't have a French education. They are Chinese educat[ed]. […] My dad, he went to a Belgian University. And he has a bit of European culture. But it really affects me how different me and my mom are in the head, in the mind. How maybe I am open-minded in some kinds of talking, and she is not. And sometimes it can be the opposite. It makes me a bit sad, cause I feel like maybe we would have more talking, with my parents, if I was Chinese. Maybe. It is mostly this. Because I don't only have a cultural difference with friends, or just everyone around, but also with my parents. And this really made me sad for some time. Just to know that I am different from my parents. I mean <L> everyone is different from their parents, but…*

INTERVIEWER: *Yeah, but I see.*

ARNAUD: *But you have to have something from your parents. And I feel that by living in the French way, erm, sometimes I can't, I can't really stick to my parents. I gotta learn from [others], not from the parents. You know what I mean?*

INTERVIEWER: *Yeah.*

ARNAUD: *And it really makes me sad sometimes. Cause I see. I got this French friend, […] he is a drummer […] and when I go to his place, I see how close he is to his mom. And how long they can have a discussion. About everything and nothing. And I can't have this. I mean. Cause. Of course I can, but it is not [the same].*

I am impressed by the way in which Arnaud reflects upon his relations to his parents and expresses the emotional turmoil that goes along with conflicts and misunderstandings arising within a family that is marked by differences. Anthropologist Michael Anderson (1999, 18), in his analysis of family life in bicultural marriages in Athens, Greece, calls such differences in "language use, bodiliness, [or] social protocol," "edges." Although his mother and father share the same cultural upbringing, Arnaud experiences such "edges" at home, and voices his fear of alienation from his parents—particularly his mother—whom he, despite their international experiences, describes as "Chinese Chinese." Arnaud labels his mother as "Chinese Chinese" in contrast to his own entangled cultural identity. I have not met Arnaud's parents, but his accounts of their experiences as "reverse migrants" after their time in Belgium and France calls to mind a study by Sin Yih Teo (2011) on the flow of skilled migration between Canada and the People's Republic of China. Teo examines how the cultural politics of identity unfold amongst Chinese immigrants in Canada in the context of increasing reverse migration and illustrates the subsequently evolving hybridized forms of cultural identification. However, Arnaud obviously sees a difference between his own and his parents hybridized forms of cultural identification. These differences, or "edges" in Anderson's (1999) terms, have made him "sad for some time."

Furthermore, Arnaud relates this strain on the family relations not only to cultural differences within the home, but also to his feeling "in-between" cultural identity positions in general. His comments demonstrate how difficult it is for him to position himself in terms of cultural identity because he fears he is not "good enough" to identify or be identified as "French" or "Chinese:"

ARNAUD: *Because we always want to be best at something. And with this kind of sitting in-between, you can't. You can't be best at either one of them. You know what I mean?*

INTERVIEWER: *Yeah.*

ARNAUD: *You can't be.*

INTERVIEWER: *You can be the best at the in-between. <L>*

ARNAUD: *Yeah, Right. Yeah, but.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yeah, but it is maybe not satisfying sometimes?*

ARNAUD: *Yeah, well. I wanna be better than the French guy. But he has this background; he has the parents that are French. Eh, you wanna be better than the Chinese one. Same.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yeah, he has the Chinese school system and everything.*

ARNAUD: *Yeah. So where am I?*

In the interview, Arnaud emphasizes his feeling that he, "sitting in-between," cannot succeed in either of the two worlds and often feels lost wondering, "Where am I?" He expresses his ambitions to be good or even best at the things he does and how he feels like he is always one step behind his peers, whose cultural identity and language are less entangled and more supported by their parents. When I try to suggest a more positive interpretation, he laughs and cannot take it seriously. In contrast to the many students I interviewed, who stress their pride and the positive outcomes of growing up bilingually or in different cultural environments, Arnaud openly shares the difficulties of his way of growing up. Only at the end of our interview, does he briefly focus on the benefits of his life story and present a more positive outlook.

Our interview demonstrates how a shared space between the ethnographer and the interviewee is opened, and how this space allows Arnaud to discuss growing up and his experience with differences and borders due to his specific upbringing. During the interview, Arnaud takes a perspective that aims to untangle and explain the various influences in his life, for instance the labeling he experiences due to his Asian phenotype and his French schooling, the differences between his and his parents' ways, or the difference between his and his friends' relationships with their parents. He voices how these experiences of borders make him fear alienation from his parents and provoke his feeling of "sitting in-between." Arnaud must cope with the constantly-shifting borders in his life that seem to prevent him from finding a stable position of cultural identity that can be confirmed by others, and which lead him to speak from a position he regards as being intermediate and unsatisfying.

Arnaud handles his position in the “in-between” by finding creative outlets. When talking about his theater, literature, and band projects, Arnaud speaks with enthusiasm. His eyes shine brightly and he is proud of his success. Touring, publishing, making music—Arnaud tries to open up spaces to express himself creatively. He energetically gets involved in school plays and bands, and also writes short stories, all of which seem to be strategies for coping with his entangled world. He also dreams of a future marked by new creative, cultural, and physical spaces. Instead of staying in China or returning to France, he plans to move to Canada, to study music recording and continue his search for belonging by creatively and artistically bridging his different experiences. Xia, the final student described in this chapter, deals with problems similar to those of Arnaud. However, Xia uses educational achievement, rather than artistic expression, as his main strategy for managing the discrepancies he perceives in his life.

4.4 Xia: I’d like to be like Einstein, a citizen of the world

During the time I attend classes at the German school from December 2010 onwards, I see Xia on a regular basis and we occasionally chat. Eventually, I ask all under-age students in Xia’s class for their parents’ permission to do interviews. One day at school, Xia approaches me saying he might not be able to participate in an interview because his parents think he does not fit the definition of students I am studying. Due to the expatriate community’s familiarity with the idea of TCKs, I had used the term to explain my research agenda about expatriate youths in a letter to parents. Interestingly, Xia’s parents did not see their son as such a hybrid TCK and doubted he should participate.

Seventeen-year-old Xia is a Chinese national who was granted exceptional permission to attend a German school by the Shanghai municipal government. Born in China, Xia moved to Germany with his parents after kindergarten to start his school career in Germany. His father obtained his doctorate at a German university and started working for a German company. After four years and one move within Germany, his parents decided to return to Shanghai. Although having been trained in Chinese writing after school and on weekends, Xia experienced difficulties with the entrance test to the local Chinese schools in Shanghai, because the education system and its ways of testing were unfamiliar to him. His parents therefore applied for a special permit so that Xia could attend the German school. Xia is a very strong student academically; however, his fellow students always regard him as different.

When Xia approaches me with his parents’ doubts about fitting into my research project, I explain that the term can be debated and that anyone who is interested can join. A few days later, I am happy to see that his mother has signed the permission slip. When we meet for our first inter-

view at the French café close to school, his parents' initial objections to him participating are still on our minds, and we discuss the politics of cultural identity and intergenerational conflicts.

In this first interview in spring 2011, with my voice recorder, our coffee cups, and my questionnaire between us, Xia tells me: "my parents sometimes think I don't think Chinese enough."[27] He underlines his statement by giving the example of a discussion he recently had with them over dinner concerning the Chinese space program. He had shared his thoughts on the usefulness of the program, which, he suggested, might as well be seen as a waste of money and resources. His parents got angry, accusing him of not being proud of China. It is on the basis of this story and accusation that we discuss his negotiations with his parents and his feelings about belonging during our interview.

INTERVIEWER: *So they practically accused you of lacking patriotism a little bit, right?*
XIA: *Basically. Well, my father, he is afraid. [He used] a description of a plant. Actually, my grandfather wrote such a poem. There is a plant that glides on the water; it has no roots. And my father fears that I am just like that, and that I will later have problems, and that I somehow won't know where the roots are.*
INTERVIEWER: *And that is why he thinks, or tries, or suggests to you that China is where your roots are. But you are skeptical if that will work?*
XIA: *Well. I think the roots are actually where the people that you like most are. And my friends I really know from school. The problem is that they are from different countries. [… it is unclear] if I will see them again in the future.*
INTERVIEWER: *Hmm. So they all actually swim a little as well?*
XIA: *Yes. <L> Or swim towards somewhere else. Yes. <L>.*[28]

The use of aquatic plants as an image of rootlessness symbolizes Xia's parents' worries about their son's future. Xia himself does not discard this

27 German original: *Also meine Eltern denken, dass ich manchmal nicht chinesisch genug denke.*

28 German original: INTERVIEWER: *Das heißt ein bisschen werfen sie dir quasi mangelnden Patriotismus vor. Ja?* XIA: *Quasi. Also mein Vater hat zwar so, so Angst. So eine Beschreibung mit einer Pflanze. Das hat eigentlich mein Opa, so ein Gedicht, geschrieben. Und da ist eine Pflanze, die auf dem Wasser schwebt, keine Wurzel hat. Und mein Vater hat Angst, dass ich auch so bin und dann später dann damit Probleme habe und so. Und irgendwie nicht weiß, wo die Wurzeln sind, und dann, ja.* INTERVIEWER: *Und deswegen meint er halt, oder versucht, oder legt dir nahe, dass China sozusagen für dich deine Wurzeln sind. Aber du bist da ein bisschen skeptisch ob das so funktioniert?* XIA: *Naja. Ich denke mal die Wurzel ist eigentlich da wo die Leute sind, die du am meisten magst. Und meine Freunde habe ich ja von der Schule. Problem ist dann, dass die immer … Dass immer, die viel aus den verschiedenen Staaten kommen. [… es ist unklar] ob ich die in Zukunft wiedersehen werde oder nicht.* INTERVIEWER: *Hmm. Das heißt die schwimmen ja eigentlich auch alle so ein bisschen?* XIA: *Ja. <L> Oder schwimmen woanders hin oder. Ja. <L>.*

image, but suggests that his "roots are where the people that you like most are." He rejects the necessity of a fixed and essentialized feeling of belonging tied to place or nationality, and ties feelings of belonging to his friends. In contrast to Arnaud, Xia does not comment on the emotional effects that the conflict with his parents evoke. I think, however, that Xia's parents' fear is not only about lacking patriotism or fearing their son is rootless, but might also be similar to Arnaud's worries of alienation. Xia, in his narrative, particularly highlights the role that the difference between the world at home and the world at school might play in this conflict. He sees his conflict with his parents as mainly arising out of their different upbringing and understanding of an ideal education, despite his father having received his PhD in Germany.[29]

> XIA: *I would say my parents are comparatively strict.*
> INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*
> XIA: *They simply do not know the German way of educating and raising children. In fact, they are quite critical of German education.*

Xia thinks that his parents have difficulties understanding aspects of his German school's educational program, such as the encouragement to question and think critically, which he applied in the discussion of the Chinese space program. His parents misunderstand his way of arguing and interpret it as a sign of his lacking patriotism.

During our interview in June 2012, Xia describes how he manages this experience of difference in his daily routine:

> XIA: *At school I speak German the whole time and at home I speak Chinese the whole time. And at school I think in German and at home in Chinese. The change is quite … Sometimes it works well, sometimes not so much. After the holidays, to switch from Chinese to German, sometimes that doesn't work out really well.*[30]

When I ask if or how these different worlds require him to act accordingly, Xia explains that he encounters many different contexts and situations that pose different degrees of familiarity or unease.

29 German original: XIA: *Ich würde sagen meine Eltern sind verhältnismäßig strenger. [* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.] Also die kennen halt nicht diese Kindererziehung wie in Deutschland. Naja. Die stehen auch dieser deutschen Erziehung ziemlich kritisch gegenüber.*

30 German original: XIA: *In der Schule spreche ich die ganze Zeit deutsch und zu Hause die ganze Zeit chinesisch. Und dabei denke ich in der Schule auf Deutsch und zu Hause auf Chinesisch. Der Wechsel ist ziemlich … Manchmal klappt es gut, manchmal klappt es nicht so gut. […] Nach den Ferien von Chinesisch auf Deutsch überwechseln, das ist dann manchmal nicht so gut.*

> XIA: *There are many situations <x> and some situations may be alien to me. I am quite familiar with what a Chinese family is like, or how it is at a German school. But I am not familiar with what it is like for the Germans at home, or for the Chinese at school.*[31]

For Xia, managing various zones and differences during his everyday life has become normal. Steve Vertovec (1997, 294) refers to the competency in improvising from various, sometimes crisscrossing cultural and linguistic systems as "milieu moving." Xia's competence in "milieu moving" also brings about specific challenges. He must learn to "navigate processes of identification" with different norms and practices and "learn how to manage tensions between conformity and individuality" (Sporton, Valentine, and Nielsen 2006, 214).

Xia's experience brings us back to the methodological discussions in the introduction. His situation is similar to that of anthropologist Danau Tanu (2011) who, as we have seen, claims that TCK literature underrepresents such ruptures in the everyday routine. Tanu describes her life as an Asian child in an international school abroad as living in "'Western' culture by day and 'Asian' culture by night" (Tanu 2011, 223). Although such milieus are not as homogeneous as Tanu's description may suggest, students like Xia do experience ruptures when moving between them and bridging different cultural practices in their everyday routines. This is a prime example of the practice Pütz (2004, 13) calls "everyday transculturality." Xia often reflects upon his shifting cultural frame of reference as well as his own position and acts accordingly. Such reflections exemplify Pütz's notion of "strategic transculturality" (ibid., 28), the competency of moving reflexively within different symbolic systems (see Introduction).

At school, I observe how Xia has difficulty getting along with some of the students. They are different from him, Xia explains, because they came from Germany to China and, unlike him, did not move from China to Germany first. However, he says that he has much in common with other students whose parents have Chinese origins. Reflecting upon his relationship to his classmates, he says that it is mainly with these students that he gets along well.

> XIA: *Maybe because I only moved to Germany at the age of seven, I get along much better with the Chinese people at my school, well, those who have the same culture that I have. Better than with the Chinese who are only here and with the Germans.*[32]

---

31 German original: XIA: *Es gibt viele Situationen <x> und manche Situationen die mir vielleicht fremd sind. Mir ist es ziemlich vertraut wie es in einer chinesischen Familie so ist, oder wie in einer deutschen Schule. Aber mir ist nicht so vertraut wie es bei den Deutschen zu Hause ist, oder bei den Chinesen in der Schule.*

32 German original: XIA: *Vielleicht gerade weil ich erst mit sieben nach Deutschland gezogen bin,* […] *versteh ich mich viel besser mit chinesischen Leuten an meiner*

Xia's reflections call to mind something I have overheard in conversations among a few students who refer to themselves as GBCs (German Born Chinese), an allusion to the much more common notion of ABCs (American Born Chinese). Wondering about this potential form of collective identity, I ask Xia if and why he feels more comfortable interacting with Chinese-German teenagers.

> XIA: *[I feel] more comfortable in the interactions, then [things are] also less disconcerting, and also because we share quite similar experiences so that we look at some things from the same perspective. For example, we are put under much more pressure from early on. We are being spoiled in a different way. Spoiled by parents' attention. Different than maybe, I don't know, by getting gifts or something.*[33]

One binding experience of these "GBC" students seems to be their parents' outlook on the importance of education and doing well in school. While the expatriate experience is a unifying framework in the construction of an expatriate identity at the international schools, as I will discuss in Part III, Chapter 3, Xia's comment shows that this community can be divided and that students with a Chinese background are sometimes regarded as a distinct sub-group. Talking about these experiences shared among students with Chinese relatives, Xia alludes to the difficulties he sometimes encounters with other students at his school. When I ask him about specifics, he does not expand upon the issue. I inquire further, and he explains:

> INTERVIEWER: *So you think that is because of the different, not culture, well, but roles...*
> XIA: *Perspectives.*
> INTERVIEWER: *Perspective would you say? Perspective on your own life, so to speak?*
> XIA: *I see that... I like it when I look at people from my perspective, but I would also like to look at things from their perspective.*[34]

Schule, also die, die die gleiche Kultur haben wie ich. Besser als, als mit den Chinesen die nur hier sind und mit den Deutschen halt.

33 German original: XIA: *[Ich fühle mich] wohler im Umgang, dann [gibt es] weniger Befremdliches, und ziemlich auch [weil wir] die gleiche Erfahrung gemacht [haben], so dass wir manche Sachen aus der gleichen Perspektive sehen. Zum Beispiel uns wird einfach, schon seit klein auf mehr unter Druck gesetzt. Auf andere Weise verwöhnt. Verwöhnt durch Aufmerksamkeit der Eltern. Anders als durch vielleicht, ich weiß nicht, Geschenke oder so was.*

34 German original: INTERVIEWER: *Meinst du, dass es aufgrund der verschiedenen, nicht Kulturen, ja, aber Rollen ...* XIA: *Perspektiven.* INTERVIEWER: *Perspektive würdest du sagen? Perspektive so auf das eigene Leben sozusagen?* XIA: *Ich seh das. Ich finde das gut wenn ich Leute aus meiner Perspektive betrachte, aber ich würd auch gern [auf] Sachen aus deren Perspektive heraus schauen.*

In his everyday life, Xia experiences the different practices and views of students from various backgrounds, which he terms "perspectives." He voices his desire to be able to look at things from such different "perspectives." I argue that Xia already possesses that ability and demonstrates it on a daily basis when gliding through the different "milieus" at home and at school, in answering to German teachers, spending time with fellow expatriate students, and eating dinner with his Chinese parents. In the introduction, I conceptualize this skill of adjusting, but also of reflecting upon these changes throughout the day, as requiring a transcultural perspective. Xia's accounts of discussions with his parents and his reflections on his position at school illustrate how taking such a perspective is not an effortless or frictionless process:

XIA: *I personally think, well, my other Chinese friends have it much better, well they integrated much better or something. They've had longer than me in…*
INTERVIEWER: *It is easier for them?*
XIA: *Much easier! I [moved to Germany] only at the age of seven. And there I was a foreigner, too, and had to learn everything.*
INTERVIEWER: *In other words, you mean you've always remained a bit of a foreigner?*
XIA: *Yes. And I also have a Chinese passport. That's a foreigner. My parents have often warned me about that. That is relational: Because I have a Chinese passport, I know that I am legally a foreigner. And maybe will be treated like that in Germany. And that's why I also feel like that. […] I think it's right for my parents to teach me that.*[35]

Xia's description of himself as a "foreigner"—although he is a Chinese national currently living in China—is startling. It seems as if he has taken the expatriate community as a point of reference and positions himself as part of a minority. Furthermore, he is worried about his future experiences in Germany, where he plans to study, and fears possible exclusion and discrimination due to his name, appearance, and passport. Xia elaborates further on the constraints associated with the latter:

35 German original: XIA: *Also ich persönlich finde. Also meine anderen chinesischen Freunde haben sich so viel besser, eigentlich viel besser integriert oder so. Sie sind auch schon länger als ich …* INTERVIEWER: *Also denen fällt das leichter?* XIA: *Viel leichter! Ich hab dann halt erst mit sieben. Und da war ich auch Ausländer und musste alles lernen.* INTERVIEWER: *Das heißt du meinst du bist immer ein bisschen Ausländer geblieben?* XIA: *Ja. Und ich hab auch einen chinesischen Pass. Das ist ein Ausländer. Meine Eltern haben mich darum auch oft ermahnt. Das ist dann halt gegenseitig. Dadurch dass ich einen chinesischen Pass habe, weiß ich, dass ich legal ein Ausländer bin. Und vielleicht auch in Deutschland so behandelt werde. Und deswegen fühl ich mich auch so. […] Ich finde es auch richtig, dass meine Eltern mir das so beigebracht haben.*

XIA: *I would love to have a world in which one would say internationality is a human right. If you could live anywhere in the world and could freely develop there. But the world simply hasn't arrived there yet. And to get by [in this world] despite globalization, despite these barriers, I have to stay realistic. [...] I just have to live in this world.*
INTERVIEWER: *And in this world the passport plays a role?*
XIA: *Yes, nationality plays a role. No matter how international you are [...] I would consider myself international. But the other people, those who see me for the first time. Employers. They see you as Chinese.*
INTERVIEWER: *You don't have a passport that says "international."*
XIA: *I'd like to be like Einstein: citizen of the world.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
XIA: *Yes. And I once thought that if I become really good, then I'll become one eventually. That's why I put so much effort into it. If I don't achieve things I'll have fewer chances here in China. Sure. It's just like that.*[36]

Xia's reference to Einstein is important for two reasons: first, it symbolizes his ideals about being educated, successful, and intelligent; second, it alludes to Einstein's diasporic life on the move and Xia's desire to be a *Weltbürger,* to be able to move around freely—a goal he feels the world should be moving towards. Xia experiences cultural identity not only as a position, or as a performance, but also realizes how it is relational, depending on others and on citizenship. Xia understands that, despite his own flexible and creative outlook on cultural identity and belonging—"I consider myself international"—he feels the weight and constraints of difference and being "othered." He intends to cross these borders through education and achievement.

Xia's experience growing up in Germany and Shanghai led him to understand the difficulties inherent to taking different perspectives and bridging differences. While this makes Xia aware of certain restrictions in his life, for others (as Paul explains in the introduction), boundaries cross and blur in subjective experiences of growing up on the move, making the many shifting points of identification seemingly impossible to locate.

---

36 German original: XIA: *Ich hätte gerne eine Welt in der man sagt Internationalität wäre ein Menschenrecht. Wenn man überall auf der Welt dann leben könnte und sich dort entfalten könnte. Aber die Welt ist einfach noch nicht so weit. Und [...] um trotz der Globalisierung, trotz dieser Barrieren dann halt noch zurechtzukommen, muss ich auch realistisch sein. [...] Ich muss dann halt in dieser Welt leben.* INTERVIEWER: *Und in dieser Welt spielt der Pass eine Rolle.* XIA: *Ja, spielt Nationalität schon eine Rolle. Egal wie international du bist. [...] Ich würde mich selbst ja als international sehen. Aber die anderen Leute, die dich zum ersten Mal sehen. Arbeitgeber. Die sehen dich als einen Chinesen an.* INTERVIEWER: *Du hast halt keinen Pass, der sagt „international."* XIA: *Ich wär auch gern wie Einstein, Weltbürger.* INTERVIEWER: *<L>* XIA: *Ja. Ich hab mir auch mal gedacht wenn ich richtig gut werde, dann werd ich das vielleicht. Deswegen geb ich mir auch so viel Mühe. Wär ich schlecht dann hätt ich hier in China weniger Chancen. Klar. Das ist einfach so.*

My focus on the everyday practices of expatriate youths in the following analytical parts of this ethnography examines some of these shifting points of identification and belonging for young privileged migrants. These points include the youths' homes, schools, expatriate spaces, and leisure activities. Before I move on to these analytical parts, however, I offer some background showing how my fieldwork was conducted and how I collected the data on which the rest of this book is based.

CHAPTER 5
The Common Ground: Capturing the Heterogeneous Experiences of Expatriate Youths

> EMILY: *It is such a hard question to answer that. Where are you from? […] And you can't.*
>
> *At different places, times, in relation to different questions, the boundaries are re-sited. They become, not only what they have, at certain times, certainly been—mutually excluding categories, but also what they sometimes are—differential points along a sliding scale (Stuart Hall 1990, 228).*

My introduction of expatriate youths in general, the first ethnographic descriptions of their life at school, and the interviews with several individuals that appear here have already shown how heterogeneous experiences of growing up as a young, international school student in Shanghai can be. To do justice to this heterogeneity, I continue to share many direct voices from various studentsand their different migration experiences throughout this ethnography.

During eleven months of fieldwork from mid-August 2010 to early July 2011,[37] a short stay after the summer school break in September 2011, and another two-week stay in May/June 2012, I held a total of thirty-one group and individual interviews with forty-three students.[38] The majority of these students were between fifteen and eighteen years old and enrolled at the German school I introduced above, or a Singaporean, British, French, or American Christian school. I additionally conducted one expert interview with a school counselor at another American school and discussed my research topic with a few teachers, but decided to use these as background information only. Similarly, six months of prior fieldwork on the adult expatriate community in Shanghai, which I conducted in 2007, provided further context for my work.[39] This ethnography, however, is based

37 While all these students informed my work, not all of them appear in the interviews. However, the student directory at the end of the ethnography individually introduces all the actors that appear with an alias throughout the book.

38 In addition to seventeen individual interviews, I held fourteen group discussions with thirty-nine different students. Most of the recorded individual interviews were with students who had already taken part in a group discussion. Four students only took part in individual interviews. Several students were interviewed two or three times, leading to a total of thirty-one group and individual interviews with forty-three students. All of these interactions were audio-recorded.

39 This earlier fieldwork focused on the so-called "trailing spouses"—mainly women—who accompanied their partners on a work assignment. It was the basis for my Master's thesis *Shanghai Expat! „Mitausgereiste Ehefrauen" und ihr Shanghaier Alltag auf Zeit. Zwischen Ohnmacht und Kreativität im transnationalen sozialen Raum,* which was submitted to the University of Bremen (Sander 2008).

on a voice-centered approach that focuses on the students' own words and perspectives because youths' own accounts of migration experiences have largely been ignored until recently (see Dobson 2009).

The questions for the group discussions and the first round of individual interviews focused on addressing issues related to moving to Shanghai and everyday activities there. Both the group discussions and the individual interviews were semi-structured. This means that, although a specific set of questions was posed, these could vary in order and emphasis to offer teenagers and myself enough flexibility to introduce and respond to other issues. This approach therefore acknowledged my own research agenda to understand specific issues from the teenagers' point of view, as well as the students' agency by providing space for them to present new topics. The second round of semi-structured interviews dealt with new issues that were either under-represented or unclear in the first round, for instance reflections upon the students' position or integration in China and the experience and meaning of specific locations in Shanghai. These were conducted at the end of the school year in spring/summer 2011 or after the break, during my return visit in September 2011. A third round of interviews with the same students focused on the topic of leaving and plans for the immediate future and was recorded during the last follow-up stay in May–June 2012. Between 2012 and 2015, further interviews with students were conducted in Germany to discuss issues of returning.

All interviews were transcribed, coded, and interpreted in the context of my field notes and theoretical foundations.[40] The program Atlas.ti ensured a systematic process.[41] Throughout the interpretation, I worked

40 I transcribed all recorded interviews and group discussions, capturing all fillers, sighs, and laughter. While most of the transcripts encompass the complete interview, I occasionally summarize passages of my own contributions during the interview. The qualitative data analysis program Atlas.ti proved to be a useful tool for sorting, structuring, and linking all my textual and visual materials. This software also allowed me to code my interview material based on keywords and themes. These codes either reflect my research question or are based on trends that emerged from the transcripts. Coding categories were not mutually exclusive and passages could be attributed to several themes at once. Coding required several close readings of the transcripts. The field notes captured the interview setting to help me remember my own feelings during the discussion, as well as the overall mood or context of the interviews, and to uncover the relevance of issues that were only addressed in passing. Chapters and arguments were consequently developed around prominent themes and codes in the writing process and interpreted further against the backdrop of theories, personal experiences, and the visual materials. My field notes, as reflections of my own engagement with Shanghai and my research, and as protocols documenting interviews, school days, and specific events in the community, helped me to remember the overall setting. Most of these notes are hand-written and I abstained from sorting or coding them in Atlas.ti. However, they helped me to reflect upon and interpret the interview quotes. The notes also shed light on the subjective practice of fieldwork, my own position in the field, and the production of "data." Simultaneously, these notes also provided insight into the students' everyday lives and their attitudes toward my research project.

41 For a summary of current debates on the advantages and disadvantages of computer-based qualitative data analysis, see Séror (2005).

with the original quotes and only translated German quotes into English as a very last step in my text production. For the final translations, I omitted some fillers, repetitions, and pauses for better readability. Due to my focus on the youth's own voices, these interviews form the centerpiece of my ethnography. I also worked with various visual materials and methods to gain further perspectives on the youths' experiences.[42] While visual mate-

42 The majority of visual material consists of pictures I took as "photo protocols" to document the atmosphere in certain places. I also resorted to "visual note taking," whenever writing notes seemed awkward, for instance at bars or at the graduation dance. On some of these occasions, taking photos even turned out to become "my job." At the graduation party, students came up and asked me to take pictures of them with their friends—the choice of motif thus no longer being mine. I directly incorporated some of my digital photography to provide further insights into the specific places the students and I moved through. Images of such places invite us to contemplate the relevance of the experience of being "there." Sara Pink notes that "photographs were important because the researcher took them when in that environment. They invited me not to know first-hand what it was like to contemplate the route ahead represented in the photo, but to imagine what it might be like. Importantly it led me to consider that the experience of it would be relevant" (Pink 2011, 438). The images I chose to display aim to support my research emphasis on the experience of the local environment and, at the same time, reflect my own position in the overall field.
In addition to my own photography, I gained access and the right to use photographs that the students themselves produced. This was the case with images taken for a geography project where students had documented elements of globalization in Shanghai's urban landscape (see earlier sections on "the girls" for more details). Some students also shared their prom pictures with me.
I also had access to student artworks that were displayed on campus or in yearbooks. These images were mostly relevant in triggering conversations with students about the production and meanings behind them. One example is Andrea's work "My time is now" (Figure 21), which I discuss in detail in Part IV, Chapter 1.
Two films produced by students at the German school also found their way into my media assemblage. A film by Kressi and one of her friends was made for an awards ceremony in Germany. This film seemed more like a PR film for the school and is discussed in more detail in Part III, Chapter 3.2 (see Figures 15 and 16). A second film shot by students at the German school was shown during dinner at the graduation ball. In contrast to the first film, the second film did not highlight the overall school, but showed the group of students that graduated. This film contributed further insights into the meaning students attribute to the moment of high school graduation as well as farewell rituals (see Part V, Chapter 1).
I also initiated a photo project during my last visit to Shanghai in 2012, for which I asked students to send me photos referring to the theme "home in Shanghai." The intention was to gain another perspective on the subjective experiences of home and belonging through students' own visual approaches. Few students responded, and most of those who did only did so after they had already left Shanghai. Instead of taking a photo specifically for this request, many of them browsed through their pictures and sent me one or two images that, for them, best captured the idea of feeling at home in Shanghai. These images deal with various themes and provide insights into the students' personal worlds, displaying family members, friends, pets, and locations. The fact that some were chosen after the students left Shanghai offered new insights into their subjective experiences of moving and longing for a place that was left behind. Two images, in which the German girl Mia captured her bedroom in Shanghai before moving (Figure 11) and, later, while preparing for the next move (Figure 30), are displayed in this ethnography. These images were chosen because they brilliantly illustrate the experience of home and moving by showing the physical aspect of these interconnected practices.

rials are included throughout the ethnography, five images were selected to introduce each of the book's five parts. These images aim to provide a space for each part's ethnographic and theoretical arguments to unfold.

Numerous, free, English-language magazines that circulate in Shanghai, as well as advertisements, flyers, websites, and online forums provided further insights into the lifestyles of the expatriate community.[43] As part of his inquiry into middle class youth culture in Nepal, anthropologist Mark Liechty (2003) read magazines targeted at Nepali teenagers as part of a "global, intertextual media assemblage that constructs its own privileged world of reality-in-images." He further writes, "it is onto this transnational public sphere, the media-assembled space of imagination, that local merchants project their dreams of a local 'youth culture'" (ibid., 219). Following Liechty's understanding, I collected media in Shanghai to understand how an expatriate culture or community is created. Liechty's concept of media assemblage as "an intricate web of linkages that promote and channel consumer desires in never-ending circuits" (ibid., 260) illuminates how media can fuel, as Brosius (2010, 37) has phrased it, "a consumer ethic that affirms and 'naturalises' cultural values and habitus of the middle class" (and, in my case, the expatriate community). The media assemblage (Liechty 2003 and Brosius 2011) functions as a methodological tool in the quest for a wider context of how expatriate communities are produced by tracing expatriates' consumption, education, work, travel, and leisure habits. The magazines and forums proved particularly helpful because their main purpose was to introduce newcomers to Shanghai to the expat lifestyle and consumption habits. In her examination of practices of the new middle class in India, Brosius pinpoints media's potential for offering an introduction or guidance: "These intertwined forms of media are crucial when it comes to their capacity to educate 'uncultured' newcomers, creating immediacy and intimacy" (2010, 36). The media assemblage facilitates understanding the community's current discourses and contextualizes my focus on expatriate teenagers.

Additionally, I collected mental maps at the end of several group discussions and during a geography class. Thirteen students at the German school, three at a British school, seventeen students from a Singaporean school, and one student from an American school were asked to record on paper their mental maps of everyday, important places in Shanghai. Mental maps, a common method in geographical research, are particularly useful for understanding everyday spatial practices. Mental mapping allows the research partner to establish a focus from his or her own perspective and thus—despite being limited by a guiding question—leaves more room for subjective experiences than interviewing alone (Ploch 1995, 24). Consequently, the drawings of students' "personal Shanghais" are subjective interpretations based on their active reflections and ways of giving spaces meaning (ibid., 25).

---

43 See *That's Shanghai, City Week-end, City Week-end Parents and Kids, Shanghai Family, Enjoy Shanghai, Time Out Shanghai,* and several others.

The various materials and methods that I employed to capture expatriate youths' experiences all illustrate the heterogeneity of the group I chose to study. Many factors influence their transient time in Shanghai, whether it is their first time abroad or their families are constantly moving. The students may need to negotiate differences within their family or between family and school, regardless of whether their parents also have migrant biographies. However, based on the theoretical understanding of transculturality as progress, practice, and perspective that I present in the introduction, we can see that these different individual experiences have several things in common. One major unifying point is the various processes of negotiating cultural identities and forms of belonging that seem to affect all youths growing up on the move; I highlighted these in the four individual narratives provided by Antonia, Bjorn, Arnaud, and Xia, as well as in Paul's story in the introduction. These five student portraits and their reflections upon their social worlds and their position within them illustrate how teenagers have myriad ways of forging, performing, and contesting their own feelings and sense of belonging. I do not aim to create a typology that fixes certain experiences into set categories, but my research does show that common ground underlies the students' diverse experiences and subjective narratives. My own transcultural perspective, my heuristic viewpoint from which I capture the various influences, connections, and practices that youths draw from in their everyday lives, reveals that mobility brings with it the shifting of various points of reference and boundaries. As Stuart Hall's quote above describes, expatriate students must find their own place of belonging somewhere within these points of reference and boundaries, be it within a peer group, the expatriate community, Shanghai itself, or to a nation, global youth culture, a privileged class, or a cosmopolitan elite. Due to the shifting places, practices, and people around them, these youths are all aware of the processes of developing ties, of arriving, of the efforts and boundaries that go into feelings of belonging and the construction and performance of cultural and collective identities. My investigation into their daily negotiations shows that, on the one hand, the construction or performance of collective identities entails the creation of cultural (and spatial) boundaries, and that these are sometimes entangled with racism, classism, sexism, or forms of fundamentalism. On the other hand, the creation of such collective cultural identities also opens up a much-needed shared space that helps the individual to cope with daily and emotional challenges when living in a culturally diverse or unknown environment. The concept of TCKs aims to foster such collective identities. My ethnographic examples, however, demonstrate that expatriate youths are often moving along borders that commonly mark collective identities and that they frequently rethink, bridge, cross, and shift these borders to find their own position, their own cultural identity. It is this common ground that I conceptualize as a "transcultural perspective."

Antonia, the child of a Chinese-German marriage, formulated her transcultural perspective as an experience of borders between being "Chi-

nese" and "German" and chose to claim Shanghai as the major source of her hybrid cultural identity. Bjorn, who grew up in a small village in Germany, particularly highlighted his awareness of class and class differences when contemplating the influence that the move to Shanghai had on his life. Arnaud, a French-educated, Belgium national whose Chinese parents moved to Europe to eventually return to Shanghai, reflected on and articulated his worries about feeling different from his parents. Chinese student Xia, enrolled at the German school, expressed his general awareness of borders between himself and his fellow students who are European nationals, particularly in regard to the constraints his Chinese passport and family background place on him. He also reflected upon the difficulties of dealing with differences between school and home.

Their accounts demonstrate that these teenagers are very interested in sharing and discussing their views, in opening up a shared space in which they can articulate their transcultural perspectives, and investigating the roles of mobility, cultural practices, and differences in their lives. The "narratives of the self" (Giddens 1991) that the expatriate youths offered during interviews were triggered by questions about home or the challenges they faced, but were often also introduced by the teenagers themselves.

These self-reflective practices of re-positioning demonstrate, as I have laid out in the introduction, that we should move away from grouping such experiences under the static TCK label and employ transcultural perspectives that allow us to understand the flexibility of youths' practices and identities, as well as their ways of drawing boundaries. Upon engaging with this theoretical framework, it becomes clear that taking a transcultural perspective is exactly what these youths do in order to process their many moves and to grasp the shifting points of identification in their lives. At first glance, these transcultural perspectives may stand in contradiction to students' everyday spatial practices of demarcation and class-consciousness that I discuss in relation to housing in Part III, Chapter 2.1 and the community of international schools in Part III, Chapter 3. However, as discussed in the introduction, mobility can evoke both a desire for stability and a desire to broaden one's point of view to manage the differences one experiences. Dwelling on the move itself does not eliminate, but rather fuels the wish to create familiar spaces, despite the next move being on the horizon. This dialectic becomes visible in more detail in the coming chapters, which zoom in on the students' everyday lives in Shanghai. While my concept of transcultural perspectives proves invaluable to understanding the experiences arising from these shifting borders and the subsequent emergence of new, subjective forms of cultural identity, it also requires a detailed ethnographic perspective that brings daily experiences to the fore, a necessity that became apparent in my introductory example of Paul's narrative, which seems rather insubstantial for lacking it. Therefore, a solid analysis of everyday practices is necessary for understanding how individuals gain transcultural perspectives and the meanings they assign to them.

Despite individual differences in how they deal with moving from one city or country to the next, the expatriate students in this ethnography all share the challenge of maintaining old ties while creating new ones in new communities. Their moves are what Giddens (1991, 112–114) calls "fateful moments," meaning "times when events come together in such a way that an individual stands, as it were, at a crossroads in his existence" (ibid., 113). This ethnography highlights these crossroads and the changes privileged migration brings with it by recounting the move to and away from Shanghai. While writing from my point of view,[44] I understand their activities and emphasis on exploring Shanghai as a means of dealing with the difficulties the move forced them to confront, by linking everyday practices to their migration experiences. While focusing on the small-scale processes of everyday life, the next four parts therefore trace and examine the larger themes of leaving (Part II), arriving in Shanghai (Part III), living there (Part IV) and, finally, moving on (Part V).

44 My point of view, or in Gupta and Ferguson's (1997) words, my "location," is not a stable point of reference either. The "Location" as the fieldworker's standpoint and position in society, as for instance German, white, female graduate student, is not something "one ascriptively has" but one "works at" (1997, 37). Location is constantly shifting: "Rather than a set of labels that pins down one's identity and perspective, location becomes visible here as an ongoing project" (ibid.).

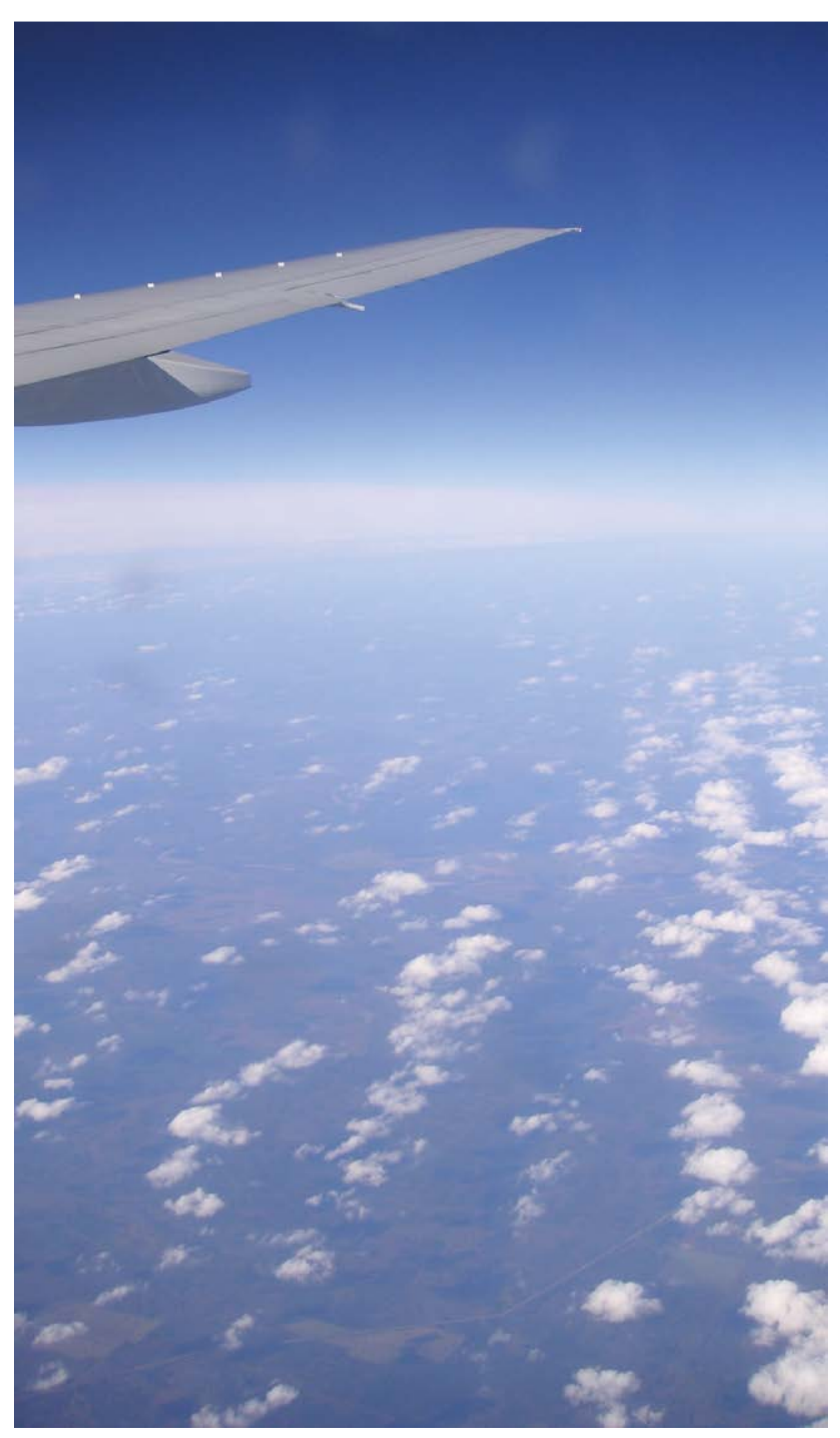


Figure 3. Up in the Air. Photo by M. Sander.

PART II
Leaving

Expatriate children often have biographies that involve several moves over the course of their young lives. Part II, “Leaving,” addresses retrospective accounts given by students on the circumstances of moving to Shanghai. It inquires into how expatriate youths perceive multiple relocations in general and considers what kind of challenges they face. Chapter 1 explores the youths’ narratives of leaving and their recollections of the processes that led to the decision to move to Shanghai. In this chapter, I argue that expatriate children have only limited agency in the familial decision-making as it concerns the move. Next, I investigate the idea of “best interest” that underlies many of the arguments for the move. While the parents’ feel they are making a decision which is in the “best interest” of the child and is mostly linked to future benefits, the children, in the here-and-now, constantly feel like they are living in a liminal space, where the last move has only just—or not even yet—been fully coped with, despite the next move already lying in wait. Chapter 2 is also connected to discussions about leaving and delineates the emotional challenges associated with moving to Shanghai. Based on the students’ commentaries, this chapter identifies their “culture shock,” reactions to an unfamiliar urban environment, new sensory impressions, and the lack of friends and extended family, as well as problems within the family, that are also related to the move. The different experiences of youths all make clear that the time of leaving and arriving—or what Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier, and Sheller (2003) call “uprootings”—are highly emotional. Part II, which is based on the youths’ retrospective narratives, provides a brief but essential background to the inquiries into the expatriate students’ daily practices in Shanghai that the following parts of this book, on arriving and living, explore in more depth.

CHAPTER 1
Retrospectives on the Decision to Move

> *I suggest that more could be done in migration studies to understand "the best interests of the child" by taking account of his or her own perspective (Dobson 2009, 355).*

When talking about the move to Shanghai with students in group discussions or individual interviews, the expatriate youths described their experiences of the decision-making process that led to the move to Shanghai. When contemplating these retrospectives of the move, it becomes obvious that the moments of decision-making are remembered vividly.

1.1 To move or not to move: the decision-making process

By examining the children's reflections upon the decision that was made months, or even years, prior to the interviews, it becomes clear that my interview partners reflected deeply upon their role in the process. Throughout our conversations, three narratives of the children's involvement in the decision-making process became apparent: exclusion, inclusion through a set of choices, and negotiation. As I only conducted my research in Shanghai, of course only those voices of children whose families actually decided to move are included. Rejections of the opportunity to move to Shanghai, therefore, cannot be discussed.

Most of my young interview partners felt excluded from the decision-making process and describe the move to Shanghai as a non-negotiable announcement their parents made. Usually, the children did not want to move, but often felt they had no choice, as Emily's story illustrates. Emily, age twelve, was born in her "home" country Malaysia, but left when she was still too young to retain any memories of growing up there. She arrived in Shanghai one and a half years prior to the interview and attends a British English-medium middle school. When I interview her with fellow students in a group discussion, she introduces herself by talking quickly and animatedly:

> EMILY: *I am Emily. I am from Malaysia. I am, I have never really lived or had any childhood in Malaysia. I moved when I was three and my brother was only six months old. I moved to Beijing, China, and I lived there for six years, six and a half years, close to seven. And then I moved to Thailand for eighteen months, which felt like a really long time.*

She recalls her moving experiences as a set of events that would simply happen to her, leading up to a feeling of unfair exclusion when the recent move to Shanghai was announced.

> EMILY: *So I kinda started to realize, that is not fair, mom; that is not fair that we have to move. And then, but then I had no choice. I had to follow my parents. So, I moved to Shanghai, and after Christmas would be my second year here. Erm, it's nice here, I will be disappointed if I do leave next year, but yeah.*

Karina, seventeen years old and attending "my" 11th grade class at the German school, shares a similar story. She is half-Czech, half-German, and came to Shanghai six months before the first interview. When we sit in the schoolyard, the voice recorder between us, Karina introduces herself by narrating her migration story as follows:

> KARINA: *I am seventeen years old. I come from Prague. I was also born there and lived there for five years, I believe. After that, I moved to Germany and lived there for three years. Then I moved to [a city in Northern China], lived there for another three years. [...] Then I moved back to Prague, and now I am back in China.*[1]

Karina recapitulates her immediate strong reaction to the announcement of the move to Shanghai: "I just screamed at my father." I came across many such narratives of anger, yelling at, or not speaking to the parents for a couple of days in reaction to the sudden announcement of the move.

A few interviewees, however, such as Britta, a student from Norway, felt they had a say in the decision by discussing at least certain options about their participation in the move. When describing her first reactions to her father's announcement, Britta, a seventeen-year-old girl who had just arrived in Shanghai a few months before the interview and attends an international British school, recalls how she could not believe it or take the idea of moving to China seriously at first.

> BRITTA: *I wasn't that mad; I was more like I didn't think about it. I just said sure, we move to China. Not.*

However, when she started to realize that her parents were seriously considering the move, she found herself and her family on a short trip to China to explore the idea further. Such "look-and-see trips," which are paid for by the employer, are common. Yet, taking the children along for

1 German original: KARINA: *Ich bin siebzehn Jahre alt. Ich komme aus Prag. Ich bin dort auch geboren, habe dort, glaube, fünf Jahre gelebt. Bin danach nach Deutschland gezogen. Habe dort drei Jahre gelebt. Bin dann nach [Stadt im Norden Chinas] gezogen, habe dort wieder drei Jahre gelebt. [...] Also wieder nach Prag gezogen und jetzt bin ich wieder in China.*

these trips is less common. Consequently, Britta considered herself lucky to have been able to get to know Shanghai before the final decision to relocate was made. Furthermore, she explains how her family explored alternative options:

> BRITTA: *I could have stayed at my friend's house, lived with my best friend's family. But I chose to go anyway. So. Would be weird to just move in with her family when my family is just experiencing new stuff, and I am just like stuck in Norway.*

The opportunity to see what her life might look like in Shanghai and the option of staying in Europe with a friend made her feel included in the decision-making process and led to a positive curiosity and willingness to explore new things with her family: "They didn't just decide, they let us choose." Britta's case can be seen as what Ackers and Stalford (2004, 111) call the "Hobson's choice" or "children's menu approach." The children are presented with a "limited range of options" (ibid., 113), with these options typically falling "within parameters tightly defined by parents" (ibid.). Britta, for instance, was allowed to opt out of the move to Shanghai, but not allowed to influence her parents' decision.

Only seventeen-year-old Paul, whose story I discussed in the introduction, described how he successfully managed to negotiate the decision about a move, though in his case, it was the move away from and not to Shanghai. Paul grew up in Brazil and the United States and moved to Shanghai six years prior to the interview. At the time of the interview, he had just refused to move again, this time to Thailand. "I wasn't gonna move," he said. His father, nevertheless, went to Bangkok, while Paul and his mother stayed in Shanghai. Paul's initial reluctance to move to China, which, to reiterate his phrase, he had not "even googled before," played no role in his parents' decision.

In contrast to his lack of say in the matter and the fait accompli his father delivered ("'Paul, we are moving to China.' Oh.") six years earlier, this time Paul managed to state his own opinion about the move to Thailand and make his point. When I ask him about the difference in these decision-making processes, he comments:

> PAUL: *I am older now. Before I didn't really have a choice. And, erm, my parents also thought it was a good idea to stay here. Cause of my last year of school. You don't wanna move right before you are applying for colleges and stuff. And your grades are really shit. It's not so good.*

This time he influenced the decision-making process and the family found common ground when reasoning why staying in Shanghai was beneficial for his future. Interestingly, Paul had learned to employ a future-benefit and best-interest narrative to argue for his desire to stay, and his parents

accepted it. The next section further examines the common idea of best-interest that often underlies the parents' decision-making and family relationships.

1.2 Family relations and the idea of "best interest"

As my interview-partners' narratives of the moving process show, individual family members have different attitudes and interests regarding the move to Shanghai. While some children rebel against the decision, others trust their parents to know what is "best" for them. According to my young interview-partners' accounts of the decision to move, the idea of their parents acting in their "best interest" is also common. Teresa Hutchins's (2011) recent analysis of UK families' experiences with moving to Australia, showed that

> family migration decision-making is based upon a process of negotiating individual influence and power within the family, often at different stages in the process. In the majority of families, children were active in their attempts to influence adults, just as adults attempted to influence children. In some cases the adults overrode the opinions of their children and in others the children were successful in having their voices heard and acted upon. In the majority of instances, parents justified their actions as being in the best interests of their children (Hutchins 2011, 1233).

The main difference between the experiences of Hutchins's informants moving to Australia, and the narratives explored in this ethnography, however, lies in the experience of Australia as a place of arrival and Shanghai as a place of transition. Parents' decisions to move are not only past events, but likely to be announced in the future, as well. When talking about moving again in the near future and the emotions this prospect causes, Allen, an eleven-year old American who had just arrived in Shanghai after his father had been transferred to China three months earlier, comments:

> ALLEN: *Well, it doesn't make me feel scared. Because I know my parents know all of us very well and they will make the best decision for all of us.*

Hutchins (2011, 1233), however, has pointed out correctly that this idea of children's best interests is problematic and that "little is known about how 'best interests' are conceptualised, let alone operationalised, within families." Hutchins further argues that these varying conceptualizations of best interest are based on the "particular conception of childhood held by […] parents" (2011, 1233). In the expatriate community in Shanghai, the underlying conceptions of childhood and adolescence often seem to be linked

to the idea of children as “adults in the making,” a viewpoint that is also influential in academic concepts, as already critiqued in the Introduction. My discussions with children, as well as interviews I conducted with adult expatriates in 2007,[2] show that expatriate parents in Shanghai justify the difficulties they impose on their children by stressing the—mainly future—benefits of transnational mobility. Parents are concerned with their children’s adult lives, sometimes even more than with their children’s current situation, as the family’s move to China suggests. These supposed benefits and the teenage students’ experiences with this future-oriented aspect of their lives are discussed in detail in Part IV, Chapter 1 and in Part III, Chapter 3 of this ethnography. Ackers and Stalford (2004, 111), researchers of European children’s rights, came across a similar narrative of the decision-making process in their studies of EU-internal migration—that of “future oriented consent,” where “parents expressed the view that, even though it was inappropriate to attempt to involve the child in the family decision at the point of migration, the child would, in the longer term, see the value of the move and reflect upon it positively“ (Ackers and Stalford 2004, 111).

Hoping for this future consent of their children, expatriate parents often disregard their potential to play an active part in the decision to move. Hutchins (2011, 1233) assumes that “it is also possible that the different conceptions of childhood operate in parallel and that particular conceptions may be invoked at different times in order to support the interests of adults.” The powerful discourse of “best interest” is linked to ideas of preparing the developing child for the future and is often used to exclude children from the decision-making process. The concept of “best interest” therefore strongly influences expatriate families’ decisions to move abroad.

Excluded from the decision to relocate, the students I talked to remember being caught between the desire to stay with their friends in their familiar environment and the wish to be with their parents. In the midst of these contradictory feelings, children also have their own “best interest” considerations for their parents. Seventeen-year-old German student Lara explains:

LARA: *On the other hand I felt bad for my dad. […] He wanted us to come along—as a family. And that was an issue that made me think. I mean, you can at least have a look at it. But, then there is not really a coming back option. But also, that a father wants his family to come with him.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes, that’s also understandable.*

2 The majority of adult expatriates I interviewed in 2007 were German women who accompanied their husbands on a work assignment (Sander 2008). The perspectives of the German mothers I interviewed complement the insights on family issues that I gained from the youths’ accounts. The women, however, are not related to any of the teenagers.

LARA: *He doesn't want to go alone. And again that was, I don't know, something that made me sad. I could not just abandon him. Because he is my father. He speaks up for me, he pays for school, buys me this and that. Yeah. Difficult.*[3]

Lara's narrative illustrates how the decision to move feels, for many of the youths, like being caught between their parents' will and their own. For intergenerational relations, this means that worries about the other exist on both sides. Often, guilt may also play a role and complicate family relationships. Karina, for instance, explained that her mother often felt guilty about taking her away from her friends. Twelve-year-old Emily from Malaysia describes how family relationships can become strained by the emotional turmoil that a decision to move causes:

EMILY: *I think that one of the worst things to do is to actually panic, because eventually you realize you have to move. You can't just stay there. Because, you know. Then, when I realized, you know, when my dad said we are moving, I said "Okay, if we are moving, will there be a chance that we ever move back here?" He said "Erm, I don't know." When you hear that "I don't know" or that tone where you just have no clue, you just know that you have to move. You can't say anything, because your parents would get, like, not upset, but kinda feeling, having second thoughts now. I don't want my parents not to move just because of me. But it's for my dad's job, so like, we just all have to move. As a family. We can't like stay here and my dad working there, and then coming back for Christmas, that doesn't make any sense. So we just have to move.*

Emily's narrative demonstrates well how children try to actively negotiate the relations within the family, reflect their own position, and consider their parents' needs. Her thoughts on moving go beyond her own wish to stay and explore moving's effects on family relationships and her parents' emotional well-being. She does not want her parents to worry about her or have "second thoughts" and comes to the conclusion that opposing the move is not an option. Emily's inquiries about the option to move back also show how children wish to have insights into their parents' plans and

3 German original: LARA: *Aber auf der anderen Seite, tat mir auch mein Vater wieder leid. […] Und er wollte, dass wir mitgehen. Als Familie. Und das war wieder so ein Punkt, wo ich dachte: „Hmm." Ich mein, man kann das sich ja mal anschauen. Oder so. Aber, ein Zurück gibt es ja dann eigentlich nicht mehr. Aber auch allein, dass ein Vater möchte, dass seine Familie mitgeht.* INTERVIEWER: *Das kann man ja auch verstehen.* LARA: *Ja, er möchte da auch nicht alleine hin. Und das war das wieder. Also, weiß nicht, wo mich das dann wieder auch ein bisschen traurig gemacht hat. Wo ich ihn einfach nicht in Stich lassen kann. Weil, das ist mein Vater. Der setzt sich für mich ein, der zahlt für die Schule, zahlt mir das und das und das. Ja. Schwer.*

transparency about future moves. This might also be necessary for children to (re-)gain trust in their parents' decisions.[4]

1.3 Caught in limbo: fearing the next move

Uncertainties of what to expect are obviously inherent to a migration experience. The fear of suddenly moving elsewhere (and failing to "make it" there), however, seems particularly common within highly mobile families. Emily's description of her thoughts and past feelings surrounding the move to Shanghai show that moving can be overwhelming. She even speaks of panic over her inabiliaty to control the decision to move and her emotions. Likewise, all the narratives of the decision-making process show that the teenagers and children often confronted their parents with anger when the move to China was announced. From Emily's point of view, however, to panic is "one of the worst things to do." Her narrative shows that children have to cope with fears and that moving requires them to learn to manage their emotions. The fear of having to move again, against one's own will, however, remains present, even when the students turn the limbo-like state of moving, the experience of living in a liminal space, into something positive, as was the case for seventeen-year-old Giovanni, a German school student and part of "the boys," who noted: "You are only here for a temporary period. Like a long vacation."[5] The implications of this state of limbo on negotiations of belonging and ideas of what constitutes home will be elaborated on further in Part III, Chapter 2.

The honest inclusion of children in the decision-making and moving process might help to reduce some of their fears and feelings of powerlessness. Britta from Norway, for example, was extremely happy to have been able to explore Shanghai before the move, which made it easier for her to cope with the fear of being unhappy in Shanghai. But it is not only uncertainty, but also unfamiliarity or even sensing their parents' stress that makes the experience frightening at first. The next chapter, consequently, takes a closer look at the emotional challenges that leaving entails from the perspective of expatriate students, while also drawing upon concepts which explore the anthropology of emotions.

4 For insights into adolescent boys' own ideas about what constitutes trusting their parents, see Jeffries's (2004) comparative qualitative study of African American, Latino, and Asian American boys from low-income families. Jeffries's study describes four themes of trust that young informants expressed in their narratives: obligation, sharing confidences, need fulfillment—both material and emotional—and reliability, the belief that parents are "always gonna be there." Interestingly, the author encountered differences in the conceptualization of trust between the different youths. Asian American boys, for instance, did not reference the theme of "always gonna be there," hinting at possible cultural differences.

5 German original: *Hier ist man nur vorübergehend. Wie lange Ferien.*

CHAPTER 2
The Emotional Challenges of Moving

> *The tyranny of distance and the particularities of place continue to unsettle agents with a putatively global reach. (Ley 2004, 157)*

Cultural geographer David Ley describes how moving abroad can be unsettling, even for agents like the expatriate youths in this study who, in many cases, have moved several times across the globe. In Shanghai, the teenagers and I discussed their initial reactions to the decision to move, as well as the feelings that leaving, arriving, and adjusting caused. Examining their reactions to their parents' announcement of the move to Shanghai and the students' experiences of relocating, it becomes clear that their reflections during the interviews revolve around their emotions. This finding is in agreement with sociologist Christine Mattley's (2002, 365) argument that feeling and reflecting are not opposed to each other, but that emotions provoke and are also caused by reflection. Combining interactionist theories on emotion and temporality, Mattley points out four dimensions we should consider when thinking about the meaning of past emotions:

> We often endeavor to understand present emotions, through referencing our past emotions and the usual assumption is that past emotions are given—that they are real. However, that is not necessarily the case. Again, drawing on Maines, Sugrue, and Katovich (1983), it is reasonable to suggest that moving backward, individuals may (1) symbolically reconstruct past emotion such that they have meaning for the present emotion, (2) note how past emotion structures and conditions emotions found in the present, (3) recognize the implied objective emotional past, and (4) create a mythical past emotion to explain the present one (Mattley 2002, 370).

When discussing past emotions with the teenagers, keeping Mattley's link between emotions and temporality in mind helps me recognize not only the students' past emotional difficulties but also their present and ongoing efforts to come to terms with their moving experiences. Interactionist theories prove to be well suited for explaining these feelings and the youths' ways of dealing with them because they have conceptualized emotions as emerging from social acts within groups. In our case, this emergence takes place not only within the family and among new friends in Shanghai, but also within the interview situations. "Emotions originate and develop in social relations" and are "sustained by group processes"

(Mattley 2002, 365). However, Mattley's interactionist approach needs to be expanded to include how emotions are experienced bodily. The anthropology of emotion addresses feelings from different angles. John Leavitt (1996) summarizes the discourse as a great divide between positions that explain emotions as being both bodily and universal, and those that argue for interpreting emotions as cultural categories that are used to communicate sociocultural messages. Consequently, Leavitt argues that emotions should be understood as both—as acts of communication and bodily experiences—and calls for conceptualizations and representations of emotions in ethnographic work that overcome this meaning/feeling divide. By treating students' re-interpretations of past emotions during the interviews as cognitive and communicative processes, I understand that the emotional events described are also felt bodily, sometimes even to a physically challenging degree.

The physical, cognitive, and communicative aspects of emotions that might arise due to international relocation become evident during all my group discussions and interviews. Eleven-year-old Allen from the USA, reflecting upon his last move to Mexico, uses the narrative of "culture shock" to explain this experience to his fellow students and myself. Sitting in his school's art room, he summarizes the implications of moving and the overwhelming emotions it brings along, telling me that he "pretty much got sick." Likewise, Britta, the seventeen-year-old girl from Norway who just arrived in Shanghai a few months before the interview, vividly remembers how strange Shanghai felt to her:

> BRITTA: *Yeah, we were sitting. I just had such a sad image: we came, we were really jetlagged. We come to the hotel, it smells weird, we get this weird food, it is supposed to be toast and jam and they can't even make toast and jam. We were just like really depressed. We look out the window. It is raining; we can't even see the street. It is a cloud blocking our window. It was just like, I'm gonna live here.*
>
> INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
>
> BRITTA: *And after some days, it was like, clearing of the weather and it wasn't that bad and depressing. We saw nice apartments and everything, so <L> we are like, okay.*

Britta describes her discomfort upon arrival as not being able to see, and instead smelling and tasting the new environment. She relates emotions like "feeling depressed" to the new sensory experiences, the unfamiliarity and seeming unmanageability of the city. Other students, like seventeen-year-old Karina, also comment on how lonely they felt in the beginning or still feel when getting homesick. During an interview, the German-Czech teenager shares:

KARINA: *And with the move. I don't know. My mom feels terrible, in the beginning felt terribly guilty for taking me away from Prague, from all my friends. And I told her that it didn't really bother me that much. That's what I thought at least in the beginning, because we had moved so many times and I got used to it. I thought, okay, I will find new friends here, and I will keep in touch with the old ones. But now that I am here I think: "Crap! I am so far away." And in the first months I couldn't stay in touch, because Facebook didn't work, nothing. I don't know. I was so alone here.* [...] *On the other hand, you get used to it. I got pretty flexible. But still, this void when you are gone. You don't have anyone here. Though you know what to expect, but still, you really can't handle it in the beginning.*[6]

Like this chapter's introductory quote by David Ley (2004, 157) suggests, Karina's narrative shows that even having moved internationally before does not protect you from the inherent emotional turmoil of moving again. The new place and the distance from friends "unsettle[s] agents with a putatively global reach" (ibid.). Karina also shares how the moving experience strained her relationship with her mother. Moreover, her story addresses how the lack of connections to her friends made it difficult to cope with the emotional stress arising from the move.

Karina's classmate Bjorn, whose move from the German countryside to Shanghai I discussed in Part I, Chapter 4 of this ethnography, likewise recalls missing Germany and his friends in the beginning. However, one and a half years after his move, he remembers his strategy in coping with these difficulties as one of limiting his contact with his old friends.

BJORN: *The first months were difficult with Germany. Even if it sounds pathetic, the only way to get through that is to maintain as little contact as possible. The best is to not even use Facebook, but instead to write an email every few weeks; they reply again in a week. Then you also have something to talk about again. But you aren't so much involved. Because if you chat,*

6 German original: KARINA: *Und mit dem Umzug. Ich weiß nicht. Meine Mutter macht sich, die hat sich anfangs Vorwürfe gemacht, dass sie mich aus Prag rausgerissen hat. Von meinen ganzen Freunden. Und ich hab ihr eigentlich gesagt, dass es mir nicht wirklich viel ausmacht. Zumindest dachte ich mir das anfangs. Weil wir ja schon so oft umgezogen sind. Und ich mich daran gewöhnt hab. Da dacht ich mir: „Okay, ich find hier bestimmt neue Freunde und ich werde mit den alten in Kontakt bleiben." Aber, jetzt wo ich hier bin, denke ich mir: „Scheiße! Ich bin total weit weg." Und ich hatte in den ersten paar Monaten überhaupt keinen Kontakt mit denen gehabt. Weil Facebook nicht funktioniert hat und gar nichts. Ich weiß nicht, ich war hier so alleine. [...] Andererseits gewöhnt man sich dran. Ich bin jetzt eigentlich ziemlich flexibel geworden. Aber trotzdem, diese Leere wenn man weg ist. Man hat hier niemanden. Man weiß zwar schon, was einen erwartet. Aber trotzdem. Man kann damit anfangs wirklich nicht umgehen.*

time and again you kind of think that you were part of it and then it reminds you of the old days and that's really bad.
INTERVIEWER: *And then you miss your friends even more?*
BJORN: *Yes, and with the emails it actually worked well. I mean, they do their thing. I do mine. And when I return everything's gonna be fine, again.*
INTERVIEWER: *Hmm. So would you pass the same advice you received on to others? Stay in touch but...*
BJORN: *As little as possible. [...] [Better to write emails] than to try to Skype everyday, because then you are always sad when they don't have any time and you specifically spent your time on it. And then you think, I spent my time [on that] just for him. And then you remember: I don't have anyone to do anything with, anyway. Oh, over there everything was better anyway; people were much cooler.*[7]

Bjorn's retrospective on his first weeks in Shanghai shows how complex and contradictory missing your friends and loneliness upon arrival can be. He sought help by listening to others in Shanghai share their experiences, and eventually trusted that his friendships in Germany could endure the distance.

In summary, the expatriate youths discussed here often feel powerless about their parents' decision to move to China. Simultaneously, they have to deal with the liminality of their stay and the likelihood of a new move. "Culture shock," the lack of friends and family, and problems within the family that may be reenforced by the move, as well as an unfamiliar urban environment and new sensory experiences, all pose emotional challenges to them. Part III, "Arriving," explores the expatriate students' strategies and ways of managing these experiences and emotions of powerlessness, loneliness, and unfamiliarity upon their arrival in Shanghai.

7 German original: BJORN: *Die ersten Monate waren auch schwer mit Deutschland. Auch wenn's scheiße klingt. Die einzige Möglichkeit wie du das überstehst, ist so wenig Kontakt wie möglich mit denen zu halten. Am besten gar nicht Facebook, sondern einfach alle paar Wochen mal eine E-Mail schreiben, die antworten wieder in 'ner Woche. Dann hat man sich auch immer mal wieder was zu erzählen. Aber ist nicht so drin. Weil wenn man chattet, denkt man halt immer, man war so dabei und so und das erinnert einen dann an die alten Zeiten und das ist ganz schlimm.* INTERVIEWER: *Und dann vermisst man seine Freunde noch mehr?* BJORN: *Ja und so mit den E-Mails hat das eigentlich super geklappt. Ich meine, die machen ihr Ding, ich mach mein Ding. Und wenn ich dann zurückkomme ist auch wieder alles gut.* INTERVIEWER: *Hmm. Also jemand anderem würdest du die gleiche Empfehlung geben, die dir gegeben wurde? Schon im Kontakt bleiben aber ...* BJORN: *Möglichst wenig. [...] [Besser E-Mails schreiben] als jeden Tag probieren zu skypen, weil dann ist man immer traurig wenn die mal keine Zeit haben und du hast dir frei genommen. Und dann denkst du ja: „Ich hab mir nur für den freigenommen." Und dann fällt dir ein: Ich hab hier aber niemanden mit dem ich sonst was gemacht hätte. Oh, drüben war eh alles viel besser, die Freunde waren ja viel cooler drauf.*



Figure 4. Mental Map of Shanghai. Drawing by a 16-year-old student at a Singaporean school.

PART III
Arriving

This mental map depicting high-rise buildings, a large, elevated highway, and masses of people, was drawn by a girl at an international Singaporean school and illustrates how impressive and overwhelming arriving and living in Shanghai can be. The sixteen-year-old student annotated her map with the following caption:

> The city, Shanghai, is continuously developing. Every day when I'm on the bus, looking outside the window, I can always find new infrastructures. The buildings are HUGE and the road is crowded. The map is what I see every day on the bus. It's a busy Shanghai and is changing every day. People walk swiftly just like they are trying to catch up the beat of Shanghai.

In my view, her drawing and annotation illustrate not only the unfamiliar urban environment, but also the radical changes, losses, and new encounters that teenagers face when moving to their new city of residence. It is the students' ways of "catching up with the beat of Shanghai" and their new situation that this part of the book aims to examine. The following three chapters discuss how youths manage these difficulties and their new environment by outlining three important processes: exploring the city, establishing home-making practices, and building communities.

The ethnographic material I present supports Fechter's (2007b) observations of the importance of boundaries in expatriates' lives and underpins her argument that their "insistence on fortifying spatial and social divides challenges notions of a transnational capitalist class which is claimed to be geographically mobile and cosmopolitan in outlook (Sklair [2001] 2003; Hannerz [1996] 2001) [...] such conceptions appear to be insufficiently grounded in ethnographic realities" (ibid., 80–81).

Similar to Fechter's findings, these chapters illustrate how, in the context of their mobile lifestyles, expatriate youths draw boundaries upon their arrival in Shanghai. Chapter 1 argues that expatriate youths' practices of managing the city are based on dividing it into expat and non-expat places. Chapter 2 demonstrates that their home-making practices are centered on both the fortified housing complexes where they live (and which separate their inhabitants from the outside world) and on staying connected with their family, friends, and former places of residence. Chapter 3 shows that

the shared space of school is crucial for community-building processes and the friendships international students form. However, these community spaces also foster the performances of a collective expatriate identity in Shanghai with distinct values and practices that also enable the actor to distinguish him or herself from "locals" or those back "home."

Focusing on the subjective experiences children and teenagers face when moving, the everyday spatial and social practices presented in this part are regarded as complex emotional work (Hochschild [1983] 2003). This emotional work means coping with the moving experience through creating meaningful everyday social spaces—places of pleasure and consumption in the city, a space where a notion of home can unfold, a feeling of belonging to a school and/or expatriate community. Friends and various media—German online newspapers, social media such as Facebook, and communication technology like Skype—as well as family, food, material culture, and explorations of the new environment help the students deal with the move and develop ways to adjust to their new situation.

CHAPTER 1
Making Sense of the City

BJORN: *The most difficult challenge was just this culture shock. To take a taxi somewhere. To use the subway, I'd never done that.*[1]

A common way of gradually discovering Shanghai is experiencing the city on trips or through activities with family or friends. Learning to navigate Shanghai's urban environment, as sixteen-year-old, self-confessed "villager" Bjorn's comment suggests, is a crucial way of coming to terms with the stay abroad.

The metropolis Shanghai has evoked and still evokes diverse images and its recent high-speed development startles every visitor. Donald and Gammack (2007) describe Shanghai's growth in *Tourism and the Branded City: Film and Identity on the Pacific Rim,* capturing the amazement it often generates:

> Infrastructure development in connection with Expo is unprecedented, and is positioning Shanghai for world competitiveness in several areas. A second airport, a new satellite city built on mud flats, a dock for cruise liners and Lupu Bridge, the world's longest arch bridge are some significant recent projects. The superfast Maglev train from the airport gives international arrivals an immediate sense of Shanghai's speed, while ongoing urban-rail development will see the six or seven lines that were in place in 2006 more than doubled by 2012 (Chen 2005), and the total length of rail-track laid at present increase almost fourfold. The metro systems of London and Tokyo are two world-city benchmarks which Shanghai is seeking to exceed (Donald and Gammack 2007, 151).

Donald and Gammack's account of infrastructure projects in Shanghai links the city to the idea of speed, which is reminiscent of the "beat of Shanghai" that the Singaporean student described when annotating her mental map (Figure 4). When I started researching foreign youth in Shanghai, the projects described by Donald and Gammack in 2007 had all been completed and the city was in the middle of hosting the 2010 Expo. This mega-event had given "both a deadline and a unifying purpose to the city's debut preparations [...] on a far grander scale than the construction of new stadia and exhibition halls typical of what other cities might produce. The entire city [was] being reconstructed—literally and metaphorically" (Donald and Gammack 2007, 154).

1 German original: *[D]as Schwerste [war] eigentlich dieser Kulturschock. Mit dem Taxi irgendwo hinzufahren. Mit 'ner U-Bahn zu fahren, hab ich auch noch nie gemacht.*

Sometimes overwhelmed by the speed and contrasts of this rapidly developing mega-city, so fittingly exemplified by the 2010 Expo, I wondered how the teenagers made sense of Shanghai. By examining how the students explore their new urban environment, I show that both learning to navigate Shanghai and the city's inherent sensorial impressions help the students manage their environment, by giving spaces a social meaning, they divide the city into manageable categories of what is "familiar" and "unfamiliar."

1.1 Navigating the city

After the move to Shanghai, newcomers have to learn how to navigate the city. While buses hired by the schools provide transport to campus, students have to organize their transport to other destinations on their own. For my part, I depended largely on Shanghai's continuously expanding network of subway lines, referred to locally as the "metro." The subway provides a convenient mode of transportation, but closes at eleven p.m.—early for a city of its size. The teenage students, however, do not use the metro very often.

This avoidance of the subway system is mainly due to the readily available school buses and taxis. With fares starting at RMB 12 (€1.32), or RMB 14 (€1.54) after the summer of 2011, taxis are relatively inexpensive for an expatriate family income. Another preferred method of travel is the parents' private car and driver, which are sometimes provided as a job benefit for senior-level expatriate employees. Both means of transportation are comfortable, but not without challenges. The following discussion on navigating through the city, recorded between three fourteen-year-old students, Keith, a boy from Singapore, Freda, a girl from Norway, and Vijay, a boy from India, shows that taking the taxi or the private car requires students to find ways to interact with local drivers, who usually do not speak English.

KEITH: *[Speaking Chinese] makes life easier. Especially if you want to take a taxi and you want to tell the driver where to go, it'll be much [...] easier.*

FREDA: *I usually send a text to, like, you can send a text in English to, like, a phone number and then they send it back in Chinese. And I just show them. <L>* [I: *<L>*] *I can't talk to them.*

INTERVIEWER: *<L> Do you use that service a lot?*

FREDA: *Yeah. <L>*

INTERVIEWER: *Well, you have to find ways how to get through. So is that your major way to move through the city?*

FREDA: *I mostly take the cab, but we also take the metro. But we don't know, like, where it stops. We only take it if we are sure that we take the right one.*

INTERVIEWER: *Okay. Same for you?*
KEITH: *Actually I have a car; my dad's company provides a car. So sometimes I use the car.*
INTERVIEWER: *So you just use the driver because he is there anyway?*
KEITH: *It's just sometimes, when my dad needs the car businesswise, I just use the cab.*
INTERVIEWER: *How about you? How do you move through the city?*
VIJAY: *I use the car. I am not much exposed to public transport, like busses, trains. I find it strange.*

This discussion illustrates that students can either rely on transportation provided by the school or the parents or find their own ways of moving through the city, for example by using text messaging services to communicate with taxi drivers. Despite these language barriers, the students still consider taxis easier to use than the metro. Some students own motor scooters, but use them predominantly in the direct vicinity of their housing areas. German school student Peter, for instance, owns a motor scooter, but soon gave it up as a means of daily transportation from the downtown apartment to school. When I asked him about it, he told me he had driven it three times to school, twice having minor accidents, one of which could have seriously harmed him, had he not been wearing his helmet. Driving oneself is therefore usually considered too dangerous.

To further understand the expatriate youths movements through and relation to the city, I asked thirteen students at a local German school, three students at a British school, and seventeen students at a Singaporean school to record on paper their mental maps of everyday, important places in Shanghai. The results show that their visualizations follow a common pattern. The following table lists the places that were referred to most often (Table 1).

The mental maps are clustered around important places such as school, home, and friends' homes, and leisure spaces such as cafés, restaurants, or bars and clubs. Furthermore, iconic landmarks found their way onto the maps, probably to set the scene and mark the city on the map as Shanghai. Additionally, these city icons—such as the Oriental Pearl Tower or the Bottle Opener[2]—may also be included in many of the drawings because they offer a point of entry to explore the city, or to identify with living in Shanghai. Eleven-year-old Allen, for instance, developed a fascination for Shanghai's skyline. When asked if he has a favorite place in Shanghai, he replies with pride and enthusiasm:

ALLEN: *The bottle opener. I have been up on the 91st floor in it and I had dinner up there, once.*

2 The bottle opener is the common name for the Shanghai World Financial Center. At 492 meters, it is currently Shanghai's tallest building, and is located on the Pudong side of the Bund.

PLACE ON STUDENT MAP	GERMAN SCHOOL (13)	BRITISH SCHOOL (3)	SINGAPOREAN SCHOOL (17)	ALL STUDENTS (33)
Home	13	3	15	31
Own School	13	1	13	27
River or Bund	8	3	5	16
Oriental Pearl Tower	7	3	4	14
Cafés/Restaurants	9	–	5	14
Friends' places	6	1	4	11
Bars/Clubs	9	–	–	9
Bottle Opener	6	1	2	9
Nanjing Road	5	–	1	6
Church	–	1	3	4
Huaihai Road	3	–	1	4
People's Square	2	–	1	3
Fake Market	1	2	–	3
Other Schools	1	–	1	2

Table 1. List of Places on Students' Mental Maps of Shanghai.

These mental maps provide insights into teenagers' preferred spaces, forms of transport, and activities, as the following example, drawn by sixteen-year-old Olivia, a member of "the girls," demonstrates (Figure 5).

Olivia's map shows urban icons, such as the Oriental Pearl tower, and popular landmarks such as the Bund, the Yu-Garden, and the People's Square. Concerning movement through and out of Shanghai, the drawing refers to metro stations (marked with a circled M), a car (in reference to a friend who lives outside the city), and the two city airports. The map presents the city as a space for satisfying individual needs. It revolves around places of consumption such as the Superbrand Mall, Plaza 66, the Fake Market, the shopping street Qipulu, and Pearl City. Furthermore, the student even includes specific brand stores such as Zara, H&M, Mango, and Roxy on her map. While shopping here could be a family activity, the teenagers (and the girls in particular) enjoy going shopping with friends. Miller et al. (1998, 101) suggest that teenagers not only visit such commercial spaces for consumption, but to express their "growing independence from their parents." The school, friends' houses (anonymized by the author), and Olivia's own home are also seen as integral parts of the city. Restaurants, bars, and clubs form another large proportion. The student even names the clubs—Mural, M2 (Muse 2), Paramount, and Park 97—in

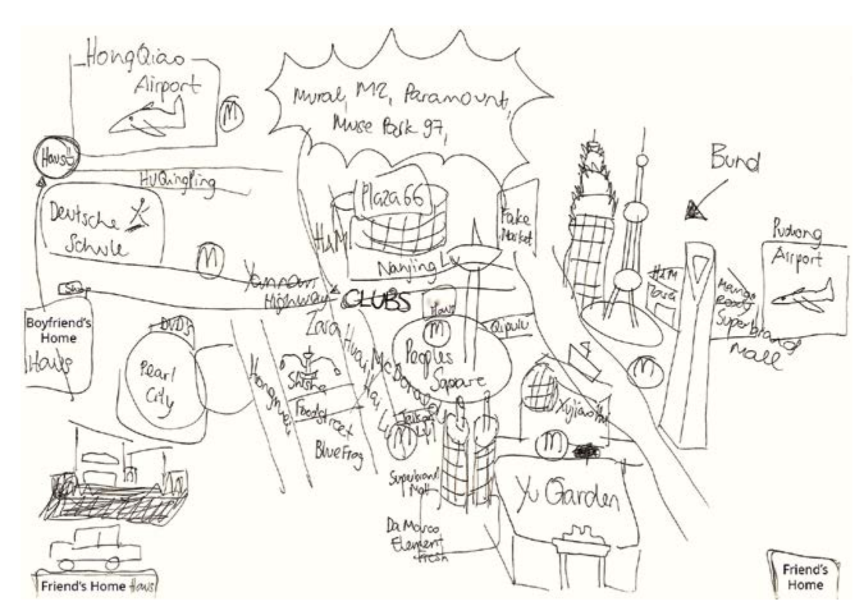


Figure 5. Mental Map of Shanghai. Drawing by sixteen-year-old Olivia.

an explanatory cloud. Her visual representation of the city, this fixing of her spatial practices, provides insights not only into her everyday life, but also into her image of the city, her aspirations about it, and what might be considered the stage for her own identity performances. Chapter 2 of Part IV will further elaborate on these reciprocal relations of age identity and spaces when examining students' nightlife practices.

While the importance of visual impressions is immediately apparent in these student maps, considering the exact shapes of certain buildings such as the school, shopping malls, or urban landmarks, other sensorial impressions of the city are underrepresented. The next subchapter aims to explore the role other sensory experiences such as sounds, smells, and tastes play when exploring the new urban environment and making sense of Shanghai.

1.2 Sensing the city

When I tried to do what I had asked of so many students—to draw a map of all the places in Shanghai that I considered personally significant—I suddenly became aware of the skill with which some of the students were able to record their visual impressions on paper; I myself was unsure of how to draw certain details. Sensories are personal, not only in their interpretation but also in their use. When I started to write down city sounds, for example, much more came to mind: the metro beeping before closing its doors, the sound of the honking but otherwise silent electric scooters rushing by, the jingle playing when 7–11 doors glide open, the unpleas-

ant noises of Shanghai's innumerable construction sites, the shouting of the used electric appliance dealers ("kongtiao, diannao"),[3] the spoken words on the streets that I tried to untangle and sort into Shanghainese (the local dialect, understandable only to Shanghai natives, it seems) and Mandarin (the official, common language of the country). When waking up in the dark, these sounds would tell me whether it was already morning or still the middle of the night. I constantly made sense of my environment through sounds. And when the city's voice became too exhausting, I put on my headphones, just like the students, to try to achieve some distance from it. Sometimes the common use of portable music players led to conversations about music. Bjorn, for instance, often introduced me to the bands he was listening to. The students and I talked about music but, unless it was about a concert in town (German DJ Paul Kalkbrenner, for example), or about choosing a certain nightlife space, we did not tie music and city sounds (or the blocking out of city sounds) together; the discussion rather served to stage certain subcultural preferences. Sounds are a vibrant part of the city experience and future inquiries into the Shanghai soundscapes are worthy of exploration.[4] While sounds seemed central to my own navigation and understanding of the city, taste was the sense that featured predominantly in all of the students' mental maps of Shanghai.

Hongmei Road, for instance, the vertically-running street on the left of Olivia's map (Figure 5), is a small lane in the western part of Shanghai and popular among expatriates for its variety of foreign restaurants. The importance of places to eat in their expatriate life is visible on most of the students' maps. The prominence given to foreign food, restaurants, and leisure spaces in their city maps shows that, for these students, taste and navigation in the city are linked. Scholars like David Howes (2007) have pointed out the importance of all senses in making "sense" of both our environment and ourselves.

> Sensation is not just a matter of physiological response and personal experience. It is the most fundamental domain of cultural expression, the medium through which all the values and practices of society are enacted. To a greater or lesser extent, every domain of sensory experience, from the sight of a work of art to the scent of perfume to the savor of dinner, is a field of cultural elaboration. Every domain of sensory experience is also an arena for structuring social roles and interactions. We learn social divisions, distinctions of gender, class and race, through our senses. […] Sensual relations are also social relations (Howes 2007, xi).

---

3 Air-conditioner, computer.
4 See Gaye, Mazé, and Holmquist's "Sonic City" (2003), or the work of the Delhi Listening Group, for more projects concerned with the creative and interactive potential of urban sounds.

Howes's anthropological investigations explore how sensory experience can be structured and invested with meaning in many different ways across cultures. While this anthropological endeavor to study, compare, and theorize the cultural formation of the senses is fascinating, my own interest lies in how important senses are to exploring and experiencing urban spaces. There is obviously a difference between being in a place that we are able to experience at the same time with all our senses, and the virtual, imaginary places that are also present in our lives. Howes ([2005] 2006, 7) calls this "sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment" "emplacement." Walmsley (2005) applies Howes's concept of emplacement to different situations in Ecuador, for example to a market site:

> An Ecuadorian market [...] draws attention to the role of intersensoriality in the production of meaning through everyday lived experiences. Smells, sights, tastes, textures and sounds signify each other according to the particular context and the particular sensory knowledge of the individual experiencing them. This points to a central theme in the study of culture and the senses, which is that of 'emplacement' (Walmsley 2005, 47).

Walmsley uses the concept of emplacement to analyze the associations between place, identity, and sensory experience and to find out how racial categories in Ecuador are produced with all senses. Her ethnographic case in point shows how intersensorial experiences evoke feelings of both strangeness and belonging. These feelings play a fundamental part in processes of cultural (and in her case racial) identity negotiation. Tastes and smells are mostly discussed in terms of their relationship to food. As Walmsley (2005, 55) notes: "Sensory knowledge is developed through the sociality of food practices, which are produced through the sharing of tastes, smells and embodied culinary techniques."

In today's Shanghai, the range of available tastes (as both sensory experience and culinary preference) is highly diverse. Shanghainese would constantly point this out to me by simply saying, "Shanghai dou you" ("Shanghai has everything"). With regard to cuisine, this may well be true. Shanghai contains German and French bakeries, Italian restaurants, American diners, numerous teppanyaki places, and all kinds of Chinese cuisine from spicy Sichuan dishes to northern Chinese noodles. International food stores carry almost everything the expatriate might miss (Figure 6).

The students from the German school included their favorite Italian or American restaurants on their mental maps, while students from the Singaporean school in particular listed Korean or Japanese restaurants. Names of international chains like Starbucks are also included. Additionally, students embrace new tastes from non-Chinese sources, as a visit to a Japanese all-you-can-eat-Sushi restaurant with a group of German students showed me. But as Walmsley (2005, 55) already pointed out: "an individual's sensory knowledge is never fixed or limited but always capa-



Figure 6. German Bakery on the Outskirts of Shanghai. Photo by M. Sander.

ble of adapting and expanding." The senses, like these experiences in the foreign restaurants on the aforementioned Hongmei Road, connect the people in Shanghai with distant places. Walmsley also noted how this tendency applied to the stalls at the Ecuadorian market, which "also remind customers of other places, times, and people" (ibid., 47). Olfactory experiences and memories of places go hand-in-hand. Food and dining practices therefore play a role in the process of home-making, as I will explore further in Chapter 2. Some of these dining places turned into spaces for regular gatherings that, over time, came to hold special meaning for those involved. "The girls," for instance, frequently met at an Indian Restaurant on Hongmei Road. "The boys" or others were not allowed to accompany them, as it was a particular ritual for them to go there, to establish and deepen their friendships.

In May 2011, when I had the opportunity to join students from the German School in a photo-walk project that a Geography teacher had set up, I chose to accompany "the girls" on their fieldtrip, an event that I described in more detail in Chapter 3.1 of Part I, to highlight my methodology. The group's chosen research area was Tianzifang, a café, gallery, and souvenir shop district that was developed from a few lanes of old Shanghai houses[5]. The students' task was to photographically document globalization in the city. Although the project was designed around visual representations, other senses (and taste in particular), also played a role. The girls initially flocked to a café, which—according to them—sold the best milkshakes in town. When

5 Other areas chosen by the student groups included the Bund, Xintiandi, Nanjing Lu, and Lujiazui. All these places are particularly popular among tourists and are used to represent the city in travel guidebooks.

moving further through the labyrinth of lanes in Tianzifang, they pointed out restaurants at which they had eaten with their parents. They touched jewelry and clothes, and tried on hats in numerous shops. Tactile experiences thus influenced their navigation through the area (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Student in Tianzifang Documenting Elements of Globalization. Photo by M. Sander.

Although the visual engagement with the city that resulted from the Geography class's photo-walk was particularly intense due to being a photographic analysis, it becomes clear that our experiences of urban spaces are always intersensorial.

The method of mental maps, however, might be prone to overemphasizing visual forms of understanding and conceptualizing the city and might miss other sensory experiences possible within Shanghai. Occasionally, students tried to fit these non-visual perceptions on their maps, as the following example demonstrates (Figure 8).

This student from a Singaporean school also includes iconic landmarks but places a strong emphasis on how she senses the city. Her map is filled with people, to demonstrate the crowdedness of the city, and images of cars and cramped, tall buildings to indicate the traffic and noise. The fumes behind the drawing of a car even evoke the smell of polluted air. Interestingly, the girl clearly juxtaposes the city against the area where her home and school are located, as the two arrows and the dividing line show. She annotates her sketches with “peaceful” and “quiet” on the private side, and with “noisy,” “crowded,” and “busy” on the other side. This second side is also labeled as “the city,” indicating that the school and home are not perceived as integrated parts of it. These maps produced by the expatriate youths support findings by scholars who have recently turned explicitly to

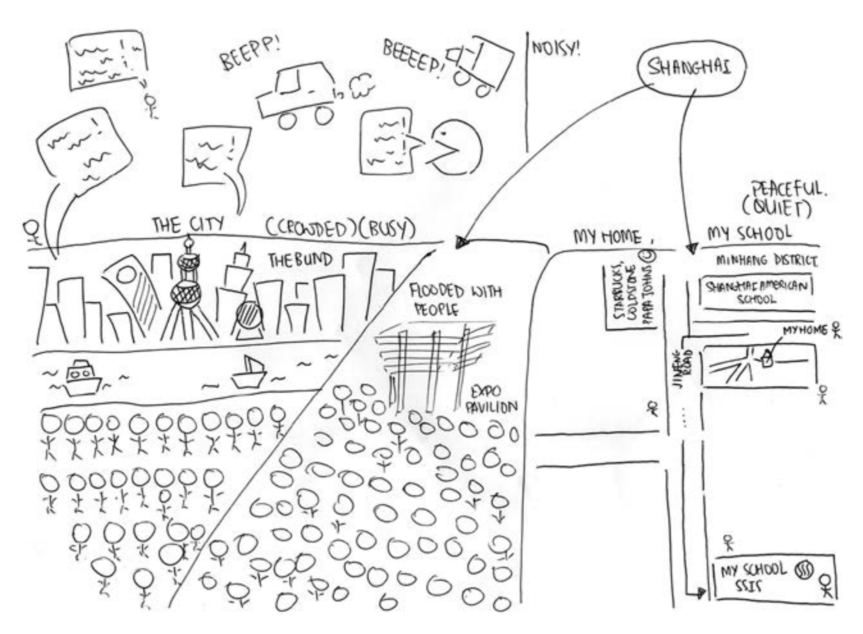


Figure 8. Mental Map of Shanghai. Drawing by a 16-year-old female Singaporean school student.

exploring the role of sensorial experiences in cities. Geographer Melissa Butcher (2012), for example, studied the intersensorial experiences of young people of different backgrounds in Delhi. Her qualitative study on the relationship between the city of Delhi and its inhabitants demonstrates that sensory involvement with public spaces is used to affectively dissect Delhi into spaces of inclusion and exclusion, pleasure and discomfort, similar to the division on the Singaporean student's map (Figure 8). Butcher's findings suggest that inhabitants link sensory experiences of the city on both an individual and cultural level to judgments about civil and uncivil behavior. The two maps shown in this chapter thus not only highlight the students' everyday places, but also their perspectives on the city and their own role and position within it. With their maps, the two girls deliver a message to themselves, their peers, and to me as a researcher. Olivia's map foregrounds the image of actively consuming the city through nightlife and shopping. Her image is opposed to the Singaporean student's image of Shanghai, of retreating and being different from the noisy—and maybe even perceived as uncivilized—"rest of the city." By contextualizing the drawings within the students' ethnic backgrounds (Singapore and Belgium), one can see that the maps point to different positions toward and understandings of youth. However, their position towards me, a German researcher, also plays a role. The Belgian student demonstrates her urban "coolness," while the Singaporean student may feel it necessity to point out that, although she is Asian, she feels estranged by China and its "noisy," "crowded" cities.

1.3 Concluding thoughts on managing life in the city

The urban geographies students produced in their mental maps and explained in more detail in the interviews convey the continuous process of making sense of the city, not only in terms of navigation and sensory experience, but also in terms of positioning oneself within it—as consumers, inhabitants, or someone overwhelmed by the urban, sensorial landscape of Shanghai. Managing the city means managing everyday life and the migration experience, for instance by learning how to navigate between spaces of everyday practices and consumption, by giving spaces a social meaning, or by dividing Shanghai into a manageable, familiar area and "the rest of the city." However, as cultural geographer David Crouch notes, "'making sense' does not equate making clear rationality but rather working our way through things, spaces, relations" (2005, 31).

The following chapter on housing spaces will further exemplify the divide between familiar areas and the rest of the city already introduced—there, the city and the gated communities are juxtaposed. Ways of home-making, including settling into the new house and various material practices, are discussed in detail. These behaviors are seen as a means of reconnecting with and linking former places of residence to Shanghai, thus creating a new network of "homes" through travel and social or broadcast media use.

CHAPTER 2
Making Home(s): Houses, Belongings, and Belonging

Being grounded is not necessarily about being fixed; being mobile is not necessarily about being detached (Ahmed et al. 2003, 1).

This chapter is concerned with the two meanings of the word "home" as it commonly describes both the domestic space we live in and "a space of imagined belonging" (Walsh 2006a, 125).[6] Popular or common ideas of home often see these two spaces as coinciding. Home is frequently linked to one certain place, usually encompassing experiences of growing up or family life. It is therefore not surprising that the question of what home means for children growing up abroad has been a common topic in the literature that deals with expatriate youth from a TCK angle (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009; Richter 2011; Franke 2008), which I summarized and critiqued in the introduction. Parents and researchers alike seem extremely concerned with the implications of growing up without *one* such place.[7] Thus the original definition of a "TCK," as I have shown earlier, is tied to a specific notion of belonging: "The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background" (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009, 19).

An article by Amelie Franke (2008) investigates notions of home and belonging among the youths she defines as "TCKs" on the basis of a qualitative study including a survey, in-depth interviews, and group discussions.[8] Franke understands home as the interplay between three major connections: the connection to a place, which Franke links to Tuan's (1974) concept

6 During the interviews conducted in English, I asked students about their understanding of "home." However, during fieldwork among German-speaking youths, we talked about the German word "Zuhause," which is perhaps best translated with the English phrase "at home," as well as the word "Heimat," which can be translated both as "belonging" and "home" and has a slightly different connotation. The mind maps that I discuss in this chapter focus on the term "Heimat."

7 The Shanghai center, for instance, offered talks on TCKs for parents. I attended one such event that was only visited by mothers. Many used the opportunity to voice their concerns about the adjustment difficulties they observed among their children.

8 Franke does not specify the exact parameters of the age group she labels "young transnational migrants" (Franke 2008, 128). From one ethnographic vignette she provides about a sixteen-year-old girl, however, it can be assumed that the age group in Franke's study is similar to that of the actors in mine.

of “topophilia,”[9] social connections, and material connections. Franke finds that additional variables also play a role in establishing notions of home for children growing up abroad. She therefore complexifies the interplay of place, social connections, and material connections by adding the following four aspects: a) “Emotive imaginations and time,” or, how long one stays connected with “emotive imaginations” such as feeling safe in a particular place, b) the family and its ties to both, c) the parental country, and d) the significance of language and culture (Franke 2008, 139–142). Franke reaches the following conclusion:

> This melting-pot of cultures results in a confusion over feelings of home [...] Many TCKs have reported in the interviews that they find it hard to tell where home is. [...] Hence, it can be assumed that TCKs‘ notions of home are spatially distributed over different countries. They feel belonging [sic] to their parental country and, at the same time, feel at home in their current host country and identify with former host countries. Thus, TCKs have “multiple homes” (ibid., 143).

Franke complements her idea of “multiple homes,” as seen in this quote, with the “imaginative idea” of home:

> TCKs live in a permanent confusion about where they belong and where they should locate their home. One could say, they live in a compromise: They cannot adapt to every aspect of a certain place they momentarily live in, because they have experienced it differently somewhere else and thus have a greater ability to compare and weigh up [sic] the different aspects of home. The more mobile TCKs are, the more abstract their idea of home becomes. They generally concentrate their notions of home on the more continuous factors in their lives, such as the family, relatives or the parental country. Thus, a TCK‘s home is rather an imaginative idea than an actual location (ibid., 148).

Franke’s findings and her conceptualization of home as an imaginative idea rather than an actual location for children growing up on the move reinforces the original TCK definition. However, instead of taking this definition and Franke’s related findings as a priori for the international children and teenagers in Shanghai, I prefer to take a closer look at their own ideas of home.

In order to understand the expatriate students’ perspectives and what “home” means for these privileged migrant youths who are so often on the move, this chapter tightly links the teenagers’ and their family’s housing and material practices concerned with home-making to broader concepts and imaginings of belonging.

9 Tuan understands “topophilia,” the love of place, broadly as “to include all of the human being’s affective ties with the material environment” (1974, 93).

The first part of this chapter discusses gated community living—the reality for most expatriate youths in Shanghai—based on data I collected during interviews, visits, and my own two-week-long stay in such a community. The second part addresses material practices within the site of the home and pays attention to objects, food, and the practices associated with them, based on further interviews, a student's photo, and my own visits to the youths' houses. After focusing on these housing and material practices in Shanghai, I then examine, in the third part of the chapter, the teenagers' (trans)local networks and their ties to places *beyond* the city—the "imaginative ways in which places are drawn together or kept apart" (Robinson 2010, 16)—through in-depth interviews. This part is concerned with places where the teenagers have lived before, regularly visit, or are emotionally attached to—their network of homes. The last section of the chapter further discusses the youths' conceptions of home and belonging and juxtaposes them with academic arguments.

2.1 Gated community living

> *Old and new, quaint and spacious, traditional and Mediterranean, Shanghai's villas come in all sizes and price ranges. The virtue of a villa is that most are located in safe compounds with spacious swaths of grass and even playgrounds for kids. They give families space to stretch out and are comparable to houses in the West. Additionally, compounds offer an instant community and make the transition to Shanghai easier (Sparling 2010, 14).*

This quote from the August 2010 issue of the English-medium magazine *Shanghai Family* is part of the magazine's cover story entitled "Where to live in Shanghai: Neighborhoods and housing options." The article showcases different housing alternatives for expatriates in Shanghai—lane houses, apartments, and villas. The citation highlights the particular advantages for expatriate families of living in a villa in a suburban gated community. I have used this quote and other materials in my earlier work (Sander 2014) to analyze and compare children's, teenagers', and adults' age-specific views on gated community living. In this chapter, however, I explore gated community living as one aspect of the larger process of expatriate youths' home-making.

Almost all of the youths I worked with lived in such villas in gated communities on the outskirts of Shanghai. To understand their specific housing situations better, however, the rise and general commonness of gated community living in China should be emphasized.[10] This commonness—geographer Hassenpflug (2009, 58) writes that "from 1991 to 2000, about 83% of Shanghai's residential areas have been gated"—has been linked to

---

10 For a brief, general summary of current discussions on gated housing in China, its origins, and its "normality," see Sander (2014).

the historical continuity of gating in Chinese urban traditions (see Webster, Wu, and Zhao 2006; Hassenpflug 2009; and Breitung 2012, among others), but also to the emerging demand for privacy, the strong meaning associated with home ownership, the desire for social distinction after the experience of socialism, and an insecurity arising from radical changes in Shanghai's social structure (Breitung 2012). The rise of gated community housing, particularly luxurious estates, has also been seen as caused by the 1978 reforms and their subsequent market-led urban developments—especially the late 1990s housing reform policies legitimizing the privatization of housing (see Pow 2009 for details on Shanghai)—and the global spread of gated communities and the Western influence on them (see, for instance, Giroir 2006).

The spread and rise of gated housing in metropolitan areas around the world (see Glasze, Webster, and Frantz 2006) has often been connected to fear. Urbanist Sharon Zukin, for instance, sees gated communities as part of contemporary urban culture, which has to deal with material inequalities in cities and consequently aestheticizes diversity on the one hand and fear on other (Zukin 2005, 283). However, as urban geographer Breitung (2012) argues, the fear of crime and violence that resulted in residential segregation and social exclusion in US cities (see, among others, Low 2003 and Frantz 2006) cannot be seen as playing the same role in China. Breitung (2012, 282) agrees that criticism of gated communities as causes for social segregation is reasonable, but also considers this view to be "quite normative." By exploring three gated estates in Guangzhou, he shows that Chinese citizens' attitudes towards gated community living are prevailingly accepting and positive.

These controversies in conceptualizing continuities and ruptures in urban traditions as well as notions of fear and security show that different cultural flows (Appadurai 1996) promote and contest contemporary forms of gated housing in contemporary China, and that gated communities can neither be regarded as a home-grown nor a global phenomenon (Breitung 2012, 291). Consequently, gated estates and their attributed meanings differ greatly within urban China.

Expatriates in Shanghai mostly live in upper-scale suburban neighborhoods with green lawns and luxurious facilities, which are separated from main roads by bushes and trees and are secured by walls and fences (Figures 9 and 10). Inside, one finds spacious houses with gardens, as well as playgrounds, clubhouses, swimming pools, convenience stores, kindergartens, and other service providers (see Sander 2014 for further, more detailed descriptions). Most of the inhabitants of these compounds hold foreign passports. Private guards, a common sight in today's Shanghai, watch the entrance gates; their practices vary from offering visitors a friendly nod, to questioning visitors at the entrance and notifying inhabitants of their arrival.

Expatriates retreating into such enclaves of familiarity construct and maintain concrete spatial, social, and cultural boundaries, as the works



Figure 9. Compounds in Shanghai. Photos by M. Sander.



Figure 10. References to European Architecture in a Shanghai Gated Community. Photo by M. Sander.

by Fechter (2007a) and Glasze (2006) on expatriates in Indonesia or Saudi Arabia have shown. The “bubble” metaphor used by my interview-partners (see Paul’s statements in the Introduction), as well as Fechter’s interviewees in Indonesia, clearly describes this demarcation. Expatriates’ practices and perceptions of demarcation related to gated community living, however, differ in regard to different age-groups, as a comparison between my interviews with expatriate adult women in 2007 and my discussions with teenagers has shown (Sander 2014). The desire to combine security—to protect the private sphere, be protected from the “other,” and maintain a retreat from traffic, noise, and air pollution—with a familiar standard of living is important to expat parents. Furthermore, the neighborhood, with

its many foreigners, offers a form of controlled heterogeneity that many of the adults I interviewed found appealing. The mothers I interviewed during my fieldwork in 2007 reported that, in the compounds, the neighbors were easier to meet because they were all in the same situation and had common interests. For the stay-at-home-mothers, the gated communities were particularly important, because, unlike their children who went to school, they did not have a zone for establishing friendships (ibid.). Willis and Yeoh (2002, 558), whose work examines expatriates in Hong Kong, understand the compound as the "key to the development of social networks," despite also pointing out that it is a highly gendered space that brings mainly expatriate full-time housewives together. Parents also consider their children's needs when choosing a housing option, for example, the availability of green spaces and the assurance of safe journeys to school. Many families therefore decide to settle in the vicinity of a school, at the outskirts of Shanghai. The schools make this choice easier by providing helpful information. For example, the German school provides an annotated map that lists, among other things, exact numbers of enrolled students that live nearby.

Although the decision to opt for a refuge from the city is often linked to the safety and wellbeing of children (Sander 2014), no research to my knowledge exists on young people's perspectives and experiences related to that decision. My own fieldwork, however, shows that children usually benefit from the opportunity to roam around that is afforded by such spaces. Geographer Gill Valentine's (2003, 38) suggestion that the spatial experiences of children in the contemporary North are "strongly circumscribed by adults" fittingly describes expatriate children's reality. Used to this circumscription, they do not necessarily experience the compound walls as confining, but rather find that their confines provide them with a certain degree of freedom in everyday life. To the younger children, the compound is a zone where they can simply move around on their own (Sander 2014).

For teenagers, however, this positive aspect of "fenced freedom" becomes obsolete as they are gradually allowed to move through the city on their own. For them, the compound's meaning turns from one which promotes this freedom, as experienced by younger children, to one of isolation and boredom (see Sander 2014). German teenager Bjorn explains:

BJORN: *And a compound like this, that is something different from a village. There you are still a little bit <L> village is not the best example, but <L\>, you are a little bit connected to the outside world.*
INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*
BJORN: *And a compound is a compound. It is quiet; children are playing.*
INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*
BJORN: *But normally one lives completely isolated, I'd say, from the Chinese world. You live in your European compound.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*
BJORN: *You really notice it. Some of them really withdraw. Actually you can't say, that we really; like when, if someone from Germany asks, like, "What do you do in Shanghai?" I say, "I sit in my isolated compound the whole time and watch movies. And that's about it."*[11]

Bjorn does not share the children's positive evaluation of the compound as a space to roam free, but mainly sees it as a space that isolates him "from the Chinese world." The desire for transgressing these spatial boundaries, which is also linked to a wish to explore city spaces and to participate in activities associated with youth—such as clubbing—will be explored further in Part IV, "Living."

The youths also cannot identify with the notion of community that the gated estates provide for adult expatriates. In contrast to the mothers I interviewed, teenaged Mia explains:

MIA: *But it's not a community. Well, back then it was.*
INTERVIEWER: *Back then it was?*
MIA: *Well, there is one compound close by, called Jiushi. It is really big, extremely huge. And a lot of Germans live there. And earlier it used to really be like that; you knew a lot of people there, who lived close by. But now the compound is a little old and not really nice anymore. And by now it's not like that anymore. Back then it was really like that. You had several people who you knew and you always did things together and so on. I used to live there. But now I don't feel that way anymore.*[12]

---

11 German original: BJORN: *Und so ein Compound, das ist was anderes als in so 'nem Dorf. Da bist du noch so ein bisschen. <L> Dorf ist auch nicht das beste Beispiel aber </L>, du bist ein bisschen an der Außenwelt.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* BJORN: *Und ein Compound ist ein Compound. Es ist leise, ein paar Kinder spielen.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* BJORN: *Aber in der Regel wohnt man ja komplett abgeschottet, sag ich jetzt mal, von der chinesischen Welt. Du lebst ja in deinem europäischen Compound.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* BJORN: *Das merkt man schon krass. Da ziehen sich manche auch richtig hart zurück. Eigentlich kann man nicht sagen, dass wir richtig; so wenn, bei mir, wenn die aus Deutschland fragen, so ja: „Was macht man so in Shanghai?" Ich so: „Ja ich sitz die ganze Zeit auf meinen abgeschotteten Compound und schau mir Filme an." Und dann war's das schon.*

12 German original: MIA: *Aber 'ne Community ist es jetzt nicht. Also früher war das mal so.* INTERVIEWER: *Früher war es so?* MIA: *Also es gibt einen so 'nen Compound hier in der Nähe, Jiushi heißt der. Der ist so richtig riesig, also wirklich richtig groß. Und da wohnen halt richtig viele Deutsche. Und früher war das auch wirklich so, da kannte man dann auch richtig viele Leute da, die bei einem in der Nähe gewohnt haben. Aber der Compound ist jetzt auch schon etwas älter und nicht mehr so schön. Und inzwischen ist das jetzt auch nicht mehr. Also damals war das wirklich so. Da hatte man wirklich einige Leute, die man kannte und hat mit denen immer was gemacht und so. Also ich hab da früher halt gewohnt. Aber jetzt finde ich, ist das nicht mehr so.*

Besides pointing out possible changes in the compound, Mia's quote demonstrates that growing up also alters an individual's perspective on gated community living. Her social interactions moved beyond the realm of the compound, as she became interested in and allowed to enter new spaces. Of her current gated community, Mia openly says "I don't really do much there."[13] While adults find that compounds and clubhouses serve as connection points in daily expatriate life (Willis and Yeoh 2002; Glasze 2006; Sander 2014), my fieldwork among teenagers reveals that these sites are of limited importance to expatriate youths (Sander 2014).

Returning to the issue of isolation addressed by Bjorn above, it is interesting to link his observations—"some of them really withdraw"—to Anne Coles' (2008) survey on the social lives of British diplomatic families living abroad. Her work shows that spouses of diplomats have considerably more contact with other diplomats and expatriates than with nationals of the host country. Although patterns of socializing vary, there is a correlation between gated community living and less socializing with locals (Coles 2008, 132). Gated communities are therefore vital to the process of drawing boundaries. Bjorn's descriptions also support anthropologist Fechter's argument that expatriates—in her case, in Jakarta—"are fundamentally concerned with the production and negotiation of boundaries" (Fechter 2007b, 61). Fechter does not simply link the construction of boundaries to a fear of the "other," but to the loss of control and "expatriates' discomfort with their bodily visibility as 'Whites' in a predominantly Asian society" (ibid., 62).[14] Living in a suburban enclave sometimes means keeping the "other" outside. The following perspective shared by Don, a sixteen-year-old German student of Chinese descent and a member of "the boys," offers insight into his experience of the compounds' boundaries:

DON: *As a Chinese, if you look Chinese, you generally get less respect from the Chinese.[15] They respect foreigners to the max. For example, quite often they don't let me into the compounds.*

TWO OTHER STUDENTS: *Fact. Yes. Right. True.*

INTERVIEWER: *Really?*

---

13 German original: *Aber ich mach da jetzt nicht wirklich viel.*

14 I see a valid point in this argument and agree that bodily discomfort plays a role. Part IV, Chapter 4 elaborates further on the role of physical and, specifically, racial differences.

15 It is interesting to see how Don's perception of the compounds differs from that of his white friends and how his physical differences, which suggest a different nationality, lead to him to experience the city differently. I will expand on this issue in Part IV, Chapter 4. It is also noteworthy that Don started the phrase with "as a Chinese," to then correct himself "if you look Chinese." This comment shows how the international students constantly have to negotiate their cultural identities in everyday life; processes that I discussed in the introduction and in Part I, Chapter 4.

DON: *That's why I don't like the guards. Because they don't let me in when I tell them I am looking for this [apartment] number. Then they say, "yes, but that's a foreigner who lives there." "Yes, I want to meet this foreigner."*

INTERVIEWER AND OTHER STUDENT: *<L>.*

DON: *"Yes, but what do you want there?" "Visit. Meet up." And then they just let me wait. Then they call and often nobody answers the phone. And then I think, crap, do I have to go back home now, or what? That was frustrating.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*

DON: *Frustration at its worst. That's why I have this hatred for guards.*[16]

Don's story is one example of how the thick walls around the communities are symbolic of the barriers towards Chinese society that expatriates' practices contribute to. It also shows how many of the teenagers perceive the compound not only as guarded but also as restrictive.

In the previous chapter, I highlighted how teenage students' perceive and manage the divide between the city and familiar spaces. Gated community living strengthens this divide. In the August 2010 issue of *Shanghai Family*, for instance, a mother is quoted as commenting on life in a compound: "Although the French Concession gives you a better flavor of Shanghai, being here is like being at home" (Sparling 2010, 11).[17] Here, home is juxtaposed to the French concession representing the city of Shanghai and its semi-colonial past. Bjorn also commented on the division between the spaces of gated communities and the city itself.

---

16 German original: DON: *Als Chinese, wenn du aussiehst wie ein Chinese, hast du hier generell weniger Respekt von Chinesen. Die respektieren Ausländer ja aufs Übelste. Zum Beispiel lassen die mich öfter nicht in Compounds rein.* ZWEI ANDERE SCHÜLER: *Fact. Ja. Stimmt. Echt so.* INTERVIEWER: *Echt?* DON: *Deswegen mag ich diese Guards nicht. Weil die lassen mich nicht rein, wenn ich sag, ja ich will zu dieser [Haus] Nummer. Dann sagen die, ja, dass ist doch ein Ausländer der da wohnt. Ja, ich will zu diesem Ausländer.* INTERVIEWER UND EIN ANDERER SCHÜLER: *<L>.* DON: *„Ja was willst du denn da?" „Besuchen." „Treffen. So." Und dann lassen die mich einfach warten. Dann rufen die an und meistens geht dann keiner ans Telefon. Und dann denk ich so: „Mist, kann ich wieder nach Hause fahren oder wie?" Das ist auch frustrierend gewesen.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* DON: *Frustrierend aufs Übelste. Ehm, deswegen hab ich einen Hass gegen Guards.*

17 The French Concession was a foreign concession within Shanghai from 1849 to 1946. Today, it maintains its distinctive character, despite being one of Shanghai's most central districts. It has also become popular among young foreigners; I lived there in 2010 and 2011, during my research stay. It is interesting that this part of the city, which still exhibits colonial traces, represents the flavor of Shanghai to other foreigners, something that also points to the nostalgia described by Amada Lagerkvist (2007), whose study is summarized in Part IV, Chapter 2.

BJORN: *Actually you only experience the "Shanghai world" on the weekend.*
INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*
BJORN: *During the week you are only in your Western world, you drive from one compound to the next. And then you're back again in this world, with Western people.*[18]

This juxtaposition, again, shows how Shanghai itself often plays a marginalized role in daily expatriate life and is experienced as a backdrop to their otherwise "Western world." The gated communities do not form part of the city. For most teenagers, the city outside the gates not only embodies noise and dirt (see Figure 8), but also excitement and coolness, as will be shown in Part IV, Chapter 2, on nightlife activities. The city with its global nightscapes invites the students to transgress borders like the compounds' walls and to explore spaces that enable them to establish an emotional connection to Shanghai. Focusing on the divide that Bjorn relates to gated community living, however, I argue that compound living makes it difficult to settle and build a relationship with the city, ultimately preventing Shanghai from becoming "home." The gated communities in Shanghai form a space where expatriates see themselves as cosmopolitan, while the "other" is essentialized and kept outside. Expatriate youths in particular see gated communities mainly as spaces that disconnect them from the urban environment of Shanghai and thus impair their emplacement in the city.

Nevertheless, students also contemplate the positive aspects of gated community living, such as the short distance from school or their perceived safety, and point out that these gated estates host their homes—places they enjoy, as the following quote from a conversation with three of "the boys" (Don, Bjorn, and Alex) shows:

INTERVIEWER: *As we are talking about housing and Shanghai, what are your favorite places in the city?*
DON: *Alex's house.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L> Alex's?*
BJORN: *There are Alex's and Peter's [houses].*
ALEX: *There are two, well, for example my place, and Peter's, that are where we are quite often if we don't go downtown, and then we chill out, kick back.*
DON: *At Peter's house it's not as great as at yours.*
BJORN: *I think it's relaxed at Peter's.*
DON: *Yes, it is relaxed.*[19]

---

18 German original: BJORN: *Man kriegt die Shanghai-Welt eigentlich nur wochenends mit.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* BJORN: *In der Woche ist man nur in seiner westlichen Welt so, da fährt man von einem Compound zum nächsten. Und ist dann wieder in dieser Welt, mit westlichen Menschen.*

19 German original: INTERVIEWER: *Wo wir gerade über Wohnen reden und über Shanghai, was sind denn dann so eure Lieblingsorte in der Stadt?* – DON: Alex' Haus. INTERVIEWER: *<L> Alex'?* – BJORN: *Es gibt Alex und Peter.* ALEX: *Es gibt so zwei, also,*

While some teenagers explicitly link the gated compounds to isolation, boredom, surveillance, and restrictions—which they either experience through the presence of adults or security guards (Sander 2014; see also Part IV, Chapter 3, which contrasts a little street outside the compounds with the communal spaces within)—they see their homes as safe places, places to meet friends, or to "chill out."[20] The next section zooms in on these homes and investigates the role of domestic space and its related material practices in the process of feeling at home in Shanghai.

2.2 Material practices: belongings, food, and family

"Home is a process and, as such, involves continual practices of home-making to be felt and experienced," argues human geographer Katie Walsh (2011, 516), based on her ethnographic research on the home-making practices of male British migrants in Dubai, a claim echoing the earlier work of Miller (2001) and Blunt and Dowling (2006). These practices are particularly important to expatriate teenagers, for many of whom home as "a site of everyday life" may differ from actual feelings and spaces of belonging. In Shanghai, this process of home-making is often based on material objects, food, and the connectedness of these objects with family practices.

PERSONAL OBJECTS

> *It is only years later that that [sic] I now understand the power personal objects play in our lives, but at the time when I lost my shipment, I was appalled at how much stock I put in material objects. I was embarrassed, ashamed to admit how much they meant to me. It wasn't so much the individual objects that I grieved for, rather it was what they represented as a whole; for me their value resided in where they were from. Together, collectively, these objects told the story of who I was, and this, as I gradually began to understand, was contingent on where I had lived (Burns 2011, 367).*

In a very personal piece, Maureen Burns (2011) discusses her own expatriate childhood experience and links it to a few theoretical reflections from the angle of visual and material culture studies. Her article shows how any sort of documentation as a means of representing and articulating identity

ich zum Beispiel, und Peter, da ist man halt auch oft wenn man jetzt, man nicht mal in die Innenstadt geht und dann chillt man, gemütlich. DON: *Bei Peter ist's nicht so toll wie bei dir.* BJORN: *Bei Peter finde ich es entspannt.* DON: *Ist auch sehr entspannt.*

20 The English word "chilling," here adapted to German grammar as "chillen," refers to the same relaxed form of "hanging out" that it does in English. Its use seems to have spread among various nationalities; see for instance Vanderstede's (2011, 175) investigations into the spatial practice of "chilling" among young Belgians. For further examples of places where the German expatriate youths "chilled" in Shanghai, see Part IV, Chapter 3, "The Shop: Hanging Out."

is a common strategy among migrants to deal with moving. Burns remembers the loss of a container shipment that included all her belongings when she moved to the USA, for college. Feeling "stripped bare," Burns recalls that she had almost nothing left "to communicate a whole sense of self" (ibid., 366) after the shipment went missing. Having only the clothes and jewelry she wore and the things from her suitcase left, she remembers how the rings she wore during the trip, which she had collected throughout her many stays abroad, "became great conversation pieces that simultaneously piqued other's interest and communicated [her] experiences." She sees such objects as "containers" of her life that protect her personal history, "ensuring against the losses of the past" when symbolically displaced (ibid.).

Anthropologist Heather Hindman (2009b, 676) describes how the expatriate women she studied in Kathmandu strategically shopped for specific art objects to use "as means of transferring knowledge and status between locations." The items displayed in their homes, similar to the rings Burns chose to wear, invited the opportunity to communicate experiences and share stories. As Hindman theorizes, "the objects expatriates collect are actants in the social drama of Expatria, lurking in freeze-dried form, ready to spring to life in a new location to impart status to their possessors" (Hindman 2009b, 676–677).

Such meaning-laden objects, including furniture from former stays, were present in many of the students' homes. Most expatriate families take advantage of their employer's financial support and ship their belongings around the world. A certain number of container shipments are usually included in the so-called packages that the employing organizations provide as part of their contracts.

In Shanghai, Mia, whose case I use here to exemplify the role material culture plays in what Katie Walsh calls "homing" processes, explains the whole relocation process:

> MIA: *My home is simply where I live at that moment. No matter how long and no matter how comfortable I feel. [...] Because we always move with [our furniture]. Because some people only move with a few suitcases. But we are really, well, our furniture is always coming with us.*[21]

When, during my last stay in June 2012, I visited Mia at home, I moved through a big, airy house located on a green compound. Upon entering the villa, my attention was immediately drawn to the walls of the hallway and living room, which were decorated with Chinese calligraphy and a

21 German original: MIA: *Mein Zuhause ist einfach da wo ich wohne in dem Moment. Egal wie lange schon und egal wie wohl ich mich fühle. [...]. Weil, wir ziehen immer mit [Möbeln um]. Weil, es gibt ganz viele Leute die ziehen immer nur mit ein paar Koffern um. Aber wir sind halt wirklich, also unsere Möbel sind immer dabei.*

large framed painting displaying the harbor of their German hometown. The painting, like those of English landscapes that Walsh (2006a) found in British expatriate homes in Dubai, seemed to support the residents' claim to belonging elsewhere The living room also housed several custom-made pieces of furniture in the modern Chinese style, which I came across in several expatriate homes, as well as in advertisements in the local expatriate press. These pieces seem to be favored objects for capturing memories of Shanghai. Mia's room upstairs sported a similar collection of objects and images, if more intimate than those downstairs. It is therefore not surprising that, when I asked the teenagers from the German school to send me an image documenting what "home in Shanghai" means to them, Mia sent me the following photo of her room (Figure 11).

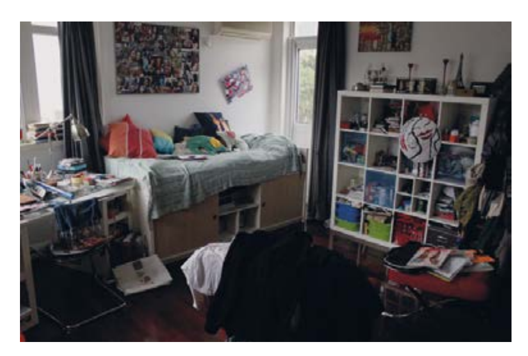


Figure 11. Home in Shanghai: Mia's room. Photo by Mia.

Stuffed with magazines, books, clothes, photos, and souvenirs, Mia's room seems to bring all of her personal history together.

> MIA: *Many people move with a suitcase. You know, in my case the furniture […] my books, everything that lies in there. If you only move with a suitcase, or with two, three boxes, then you don't take everything along, but also leave a few things behind. I have things, my goodness, which I really don't need anymore. If I moved right now and opened a second room, I would leave a lot of things behind, but would not throw them away. […] But I could not live in an empty room. Absolutely not. I think if I moved without my stuff, nevertheless, after a month at the most, my room would be full. I don't know, I just need that. It has always been like that.*[22]

22 German original: MIA: *Viele Leute, die ziehen mit dem Koffer um. Weißt du, bei mir die Möbel, […] meine Bücher, was da alles drinne liegt [sind dabei]. Wenn du nur mit dem Koffer umziehst, oder mit zwei, drei Kisten, dann nimmst du ja nicht alles mit, sondern lässt eben auch einiges stehen. Weil ich hab ja Sachen, meine Güte, die brauch ich ja echt nicht mehr. Aber man kann sich dann eben auch nicht trennen. Wenn ich jetzt umziehen würde und ein zweites Zimmer eröffnen würde sozusagen, würd ich halt viele Sachen auch stehen lassen, aber die ja trotzdem nicht wegschmei-*

Objects and the associations they evoke make her feel at home. The miniature Eiffel tower, the hat from Vietnam, the pillow on the bed displaying Shanghai's iconic buildings, for instance, all relate to places she has been. An issue of the German women's magazine *Brigitte* hints at connections to German or global female consumer culture. Photographs display friends, friendships, and memorable moments.

> MIA: *I think photos are really important. Photos are what I cling to most. Oh, one time, I lost all my photos. Well, I deleted all of them accidentally. I was so desperate. <L> I was sooo desperate.*[23]

Her narrative of losing all her photos, which she could only partly regain through friends and parents, is reminiscent of Burns' (2011) account of losing her belongings and, consequently, the reminders and markers of who she is. Mia's room shows that some items, for instance the Shanghai pillow, might have been purchased with the future in mind, like the objects belonging to Hindman's actors in Nepal, "ready to spring to life in a new location" (Hindman 2009b, 676–677). While Hindman stresses how such memorabilia "impart status to their possessors," I see them as helpful means for expatriate youths to adjust to new places of residence.

FOOD

In her article "The Taste of Home," Elia Petridou (2001, 89) studies Greek students' culinary practices in London, showing how food can create "the experience of home as a sensory totality." By exploring food culture, Petridou sees home as located "away from its physical structures of the house" but still linked to the material world, understanding it "as a practice and a combination of processes through which its inhabitants acquire a sense of history and identity" (ibid., 88). I can relate to the importance of food in feeling at home. While I enjoyed exploring my Chinese surroundings by dining out in local restaurants, eateries, noodle shops, and street food stalls, I occasionally prepared "home" food at home.[24] However, I was startled to find that, for many students, these clear place/taste relationships were dissolv-

---

ßen. […] Aber ich könnte nicht in so einem leeren Zimmer leben. Echt nicht. Ich glaube wenn ich umziehen würde ohne meine Sachen, trotzdem, spätestens nach einem Monat wär mein Zimmer voll. Ich weiß nicht, ich brauch das. Und das war auch immer so.

23 German original: MIA: *Ich finde Fotos sind soo wichtig. Also, Fotos sind immer das, wo ich mich am meisten so dran klammere. Oh einmal, da hab ich meine ganzen Fotos verloren. Also ich hab die alle gelöscht, ausversehen. Ich war so am Ende. <L> Ich war sooo am Ende.*

24 I call this type of food "home food," as I would not consider these meals specifically German or "authentic" to other regions, but rather food that includes imported groceries which I or my research participants used before and that are specialties in Shanghai, such as cheese, olives, Italian pasta, bread, cream, wine, or other items. For Asian students, these ingredient lists also included

ing, or had even turned the other way around. While I had learned from the students' maps and participant observation that the teenagers enjoyed eating out in Western style restaurants, I initially underestimated the role of the *ayi,*[25] the maid or nanny, until a discussion with Paul drew my attention to the issue.

> INTERVIEWER: *Do you mainly go to Western restaurants? Or do you go to eat Chinese?*
>
> PAUL: *Well, my ayi can make Chinese food.*

The students experience Chinese food at home, prepared by the family's maid, and the city of Shanghai therefore often provides the international food they crave. Of course some of the students enjoy their native cuisine at home, as an *ayi* working for several foreign families told me. Although she would cook Chinese food two or three times per week, she was particularly proud of her skills preparing pizza, making spinach pies, and baking whole wheat bread. Not in all households, however, is the preparation of meals left to the *ayi*. After one interview with three of "the boys," Bjorn made everyone jealous by saying that his mom was awaiting him at home, along with homemade Spaghetti Bolognese. Apparently this was exceptional, as many expatriate families rely on their maid for food preparation. Generally, "home" food is noticeably missed. Paul, who grew up in the United States, for instance, would crave Slurpees (iced, flavored drinks). Most of the German boys commented on missing kebabs, or food they associated with their grandmothers' cooking, such as potato salad or roast beef. The category of home food, however, becomes questionable when Chinese dishes become an integrated part of the diet at home and "home food"—Western dishes—part of dining out in the city. For expatriate students, food therefore rather relates to broader ideas of home, as Mia's account on the relationship between certain food smells and feelings of being at home illustrates:

---

imports from Korea, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and India, such as different curry pastes.

25 Among expatriate families and middle class Chinese citizens, it is common to have a maid that helps with cleaning, cooking, or child rearing. As explained earlier, the maid is commonly called "*ayi,*" which literally translates to "aunt." Teenagers, like everyone else in the expatriate community, have kept the Chinese term. For contemplations on the role of household staff in students' lives and its impact on understanding class and class-consciousness, see Heather Hindman (2009b) and Part III, Chapter 3.3 of this study. For the role of the maid in Chinese households, see Wanning Sun (2008).

> MIA: *Well, Germany is my home, but Germany as a country. This is the case as soon as I step out of the airport and smell the bakery aromas.*[26] *That simply is home. That is not a specific place, but this feeling that I only have in Germany.*[27]

Certain practices surrounding food, however, can encourage the process of home-making, as Bjorn's pride in his mother's Bolognese shows. The fact that his mother—and not the maid—prepared the dish was also crucial to its value.

FAMILY LIFE AND SETTLING IN

Mia's, Bjorn's, and their peers' experiences show that material culture plays a significant role in making home a meaningful place for teenagers' everyday lives. Further details from Mia's case highlight the reciprocal relationship between materiality and human practices in the process of turning a new place into a home.

Mia, who has moved several times in her life, always draws a lot of strength from her family. She and her two siblings have very close relationships and it seems to me that shared family activities are an important coping mechanism for her. This impression is confirmed when she tells me about her struggles when her father and older sister had to leave Shanghai due to job obligations and college. Mia, her mother, and brother stayed on in Shanghai, however, for Mia to finish her last year of school. During our interview a year later, she recalls:

> MIA: *There was a difficult moment when we came to know that my father had to move. That really wasn't great. Especially in the beginning, because my father and sister both stayed in Germany. And the three of us came back to move into this house [in Shanghai]. We had lived in a different house before. That was no easy time. I was really… The first month, every evening, I was always sad, I cried a lot. It was okay during the day when I was at school, but [difficult] in the evenings at home. Our family life changed a lot. We all used to sit around the dinner table, and now we are only three, and usually someone is not there. Well, it really did change a lot.*

26 For an understanding of the meaning of bread for German communities abroad, see chapter nine "Vermissen, Organisieren, Neuentdecken" of Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich's (2002) ethnographic study of Germans in New Zealand, *Auswandern: Destination Neuseeland.*

27 German original: MIA: *Also, Deutschland so ist meine Heimat, aber Deutschland so als Land. Das ist schon so wenn ich aus dem Flughafen geh und den Bäckereigeruch rieche, das ist dann einfach Heimat. Das ist jetzt nicht wirklich unbedingt ein spezieller Ort, sondern so einfach dieses Gefühl, was ich in Deutschland nur hab.*

Sometimes we have to make plans: Okay, let's all go out for dinner together, so we can all talk for hours again. Otherwise you talk, sure, but only two of us, rarely all three.[28]

Mia misses her father and sister, but she also misses the communal dinner as a family routine that is crucial to rendering the place of residence into home. When I inquire about her strategies for dealing with the new situation at home, she explains:

MIA: *Well, since we have become such a small family, I plan a lot of activities. So I am really out a lot, simply because… Well, I used to be happy to be home alone once in a while, because it so rarely happened. If you are five people, it rarely happens. And now I don't enjoy being home alone, then I am like, "Okay, what do I do now?" So when I am home alone I usually go downtown or just do something with friends. […] My calendar is actually always full. That's sort of my strategy. Well, sure, I also think a lot. But sitting at home all the time, everything is kind of crashing down around you the whole time, but you can't do anything about it, and you're just sitting around stupidly.*[29]

Since these dinners no longer convey the sense of home, Mia prefers to spend time outside with her friends, establishing new practices of home-making for herself in Shanghai.[30] Likewise, many of the expatriate students learn to live with fathers who are often absent. Eleven-year-old

---

28 German original: MIA: *Da war bei mir noch ein schwieriger Moment als es hieß, dass mein Vater wegziehen muss. Das war halt, das war wirklich nicht schön. Vor allem die erste Zeit, weil mein Vater und meine Schwester sind dann ja gleichzeitig in Deutschland geblieben. Und wir sind zu dritt wiedergekommen und sind in dieses Haus [in Shanghai] gezogen. Davor haben wir in einem anderen Haus gelebt. Das war keine einfache Zeit. Weil da war ich wirklich … Den ersten Monat war ich jeden Abend so, oh nee, war immer traurig, hab viel geweint. […] Also wenn ich tagsüber in der Schule war, war kein Problem […] Aber abends halt zu Hause, hmm. […] Das Familienleben hat sich schon verändert. Davor saßen wir immer alle gemeinsam am Abendbrottisch. Und jetzt sind wir halt, dadurch dass wir zu dritt sind, ist eigentlich fast immer einer nicht da. Also es hat sich schon sehr verändert. Wir müssen uns teilweise verabreden: „Okay, wir gehen jetzt mal wieder zusammen essen, damit wir mal wieder stundenlang alle miteinander reden können." Weil sonst, klar, man redet zu zweit, aber zu dritt halt seltener.*

29 German original: MIA: *Also seitdem wir so eine kleine Familie sind, nehme ich mir halt extrem viel vor. Das heißt ich bin wirklich viel unterwegs, weil ich halt … Also früher war ich manchmal echt froh alleine zu Hause zu sein, weil es kam echt nicht oft vor. Wenn du zu fünft bist, kommt es nicht oft vor. Und jetzt bin ich nicht so gerne alleine zu Hause, das heißt ich bin irgendwie so „Okay, was mach ich jetzt?" Deswegen, wenn ich alleine zu Hause bin, fahr ich meistens in die Stadt oder mach halt was mit Freunden. […] Mein Kalender ist eigentlich immer voll. Das ist so meine Strategie. Also, klar, denk ich auch viel nach. Aber so die ganze Zeit zu Hause sitzen und die ganze Zeit stürzt so alles auf dich ein, aber du kannst eigentlich nicht wirklich was tun, sondern sitzt da nur so blöd rum.*

30 The chapters in Part IV, "Living," further discuss practices of emplacement in the city and outside the home.

Allen, for instance, only sees his father on the weekends, when he returns from his work site in a minor Chinese city.

It is evident that the expatriate teenagers' material practices of creating "home" are continuous negotiations, not only of home as a site, but also of processes of emplacement in the city and of larger understandings of belonging, as Walsh succinctly phrases it: "Domestic materialities can play a highly significant role in migrants' negotiation of geographies of belonging, residence, landscape and place" (2011, 516). Basu and Coleman argue that material culture shows how migrants not only change their place, but also "their place within the 'world' they have entered" (2008, 324). Having laid open the connections between belongings and belonging, the next section explores the latter in more detail and links theoretical positions to the students' own perspectives on their place in the world.

2.3 (Trans)local ties: theorizing students' negotiations of home and belonging

> *Diasporic identities are at once local and global. They are networks of transnational identification encompassing "imagined" and "encountered" communities (Brah 1996, 196).*

The questions of belonging and home are central topics in migration studies and have led to various conceptualizations. Researchers across different disciplines have analyzed and conceptualized transnational migrants' practices and understood migrant forms of belonging, often "through abstracted spatial tropes" (Walsh 2006a, 124), putting emphasis on the state of "in-betweenness" and the multiple ties migrants maintain. For instance, Vertovec writes, in regard to these multiple ties:

> Many migrants today intensively conduct activities and maintain substantial commitments that link them with significant others [...] who dwell in nation-states other than those in which the migrants themselves reside. Migrants now maintain such connections through uses of technology, travel and financial mechanisms more intensely than ever before possible (Vertovec 2004, 970–971).

With the rise of multiple connections, Simon Turner (2008, 1050) argues that "transnational migration and diasporic communities contain an inherent spatial tension, as populations no longer 'fit' their territory—belonging to several places at once." Other concepts using "abstracted spatial tropes" to understand the complex processes of linking places and people across borders and the migrant's "position" in these networks include "transnational social spaces" (Pries 2001), "ethnoscapes" (Appadurai 1996), and the "third space" (Bhabha [1994] 2009).

Katie Walsh (2006*a*, 124) succinctly outlines the discourse on migration and home, recalling that, at the end of the twentieth century, theorists described "contemporary social life and individual experience that privileged global movement." Summarizing the discussion of, among others, Castells ([1996] 2000), Hannerz ([1996] 2001), Chambers (1994), and Robertson et al. (1994), Walsh proposes that "we live in a world of 'flows' and societies in which identities are destabilized and detached from place," but points out that ideas which "privilege movement over attachment" have since been contested and criticized for "their insensitivity towards the continued importance of place, dwelling, and home." According to Walsh, Geraldine Pratt's (1992) reflections on the "problematic nature of the hierarchical dualism of mobility/dwelling established by these literatures,"[31] inspired theorists such as Brah (1996), Rapport and Dawson (1998), and Ahmed et al. (2003) to understand home and migration as being interdependent (ibid.). Increasingly, scholars—Walsh (2006a, 124) refers to Lamb (2002) and the geographers Jackson, Crang, and Dwyer (2004); the ethnographer Englund's (2002) post-globalist approach that was discussed earlier could be added—now call for research on processes of migration that is "'grounded' through attention to the ways such processes are locally lived and produced" (Walsh 2006a, 124). This critique of earlier conceptualizations of the impact of migration on belonging that disregard the role of place also echoes Avtar Brah's warning that "the very strong association of notions of diaspora with displacement and dislocation means that the experience of *location* can easily dissolve out of focus" (1996, 180).

The two preceding parts of this chapter have therefore stressed the experiences and practices revolving around the concrete site of the home and its embeddedness in the larger context of gated community living in Shanghai, with its inherent demarcation from local society. But how are these practices of settling in and demarcation related to the movement of expatriate youths and global, flowing, and shifting connections and identifications? The final section of this chapter consequently investigates students' own perspectives on belonging by investigating their relationships with places and people beyond Shanghai, and to abstract or imagined ideas or emotions as emerging from their experiences of mobility and home-making.

31 In a commentary on spatial metaphors and speaking positions, Geraldine Pratt warns against the "rhetoric of mobility and detachment from place" (1992, 241) that increasingly informs the metaphors used in contemporary cultural studies literature. This rhetoric praises mobility and privileges movement in the production of knowledge. Pratt argues that these metaphors run the risk of promoting an understanding of dwelling that focuses solely on reactionary ideas or problems, as in some forms of nationalism, for example, and calls for understanding dwelling also as "the legitimacy and value of peoples' struggles to create their own places and memories" (Pratt 1992, 243). Pratt emphasizes that this focus needs to accompany "the rhetoric of movement that privileges detachment from place" in order to "break down a new hierarchy of difference created through the seemingly fashionable mobility—dwelling duality" (ibid.).

TALKING ABOUT HOME AND BELONGING

Following the importance given to home and belonging in previous research, I discussed the topic during all interviews with students. During these conversations, I sometimes feared that the term “home” referred to a quite prescriptive idea and that students would feel obliged to position themselves or state alliances to nationality or places of “origin.” However, I still considered “home,” as a part of everyday vocabulary, the best choice. I then tried to open up the discussion by asking not only “Where is home for you?” but by further asking: “What do you usually reply when someone asks you where you are from?” I initiated discussion following these questions and asked the students how they felt about them, and whether these were easy or difficult questions to answer. It became apparent that, for many students, the answers heavily depended on *who* would ask them, a trend that points out how performative and relational the politics of home are. The following section presents these interviews and a discussion in the form of mind maps that were produced at the German school. The students were asked to discuss their ideas of “Heimat” (belonging/home) in written form, in class. These mind maps show that home is a term which brings about many associations and emotions (Figure 12).

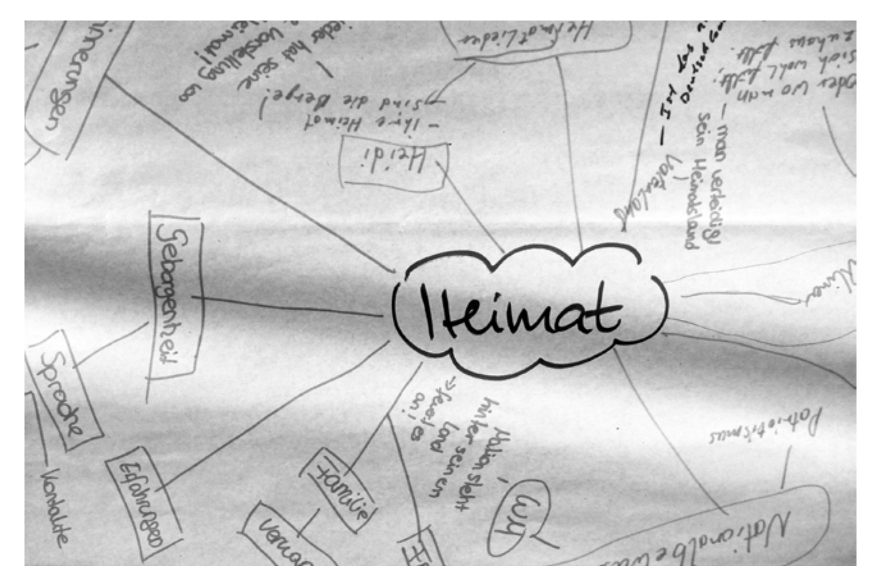


Figure 12. Section of Mind Map 1 on “Heimat.” Drawing by four students.

Covering a variety of issues, the students refer to the places where they grew up and “childhood,” as well as “memories” and “experiences” in general. They list “family” and the presence of relatives and pets. Likewise, friends feature prominently in all four sketches, and are linked to comments on community and trust. “School” also finds its way onto one of the posters.

The teenagers also discuss sensorial experiences, such as climate and food, and familiar cultural practices, such as festivals and language. Houses and apartments as well as objects such as photos, videos, and music appear on the maps, too.

"Heimat" also evokes comments on patriotism, birthplace, nationality, nation states ("Germany, China") and mega-events like the World Cup ("Nation stands behind its country → roots for it").

Moreover, all the sketches display discussions on media, listing social networks and services such as Facebook, Gowalla, Twitter, Myspace, and forms of communication such as VoIP (Voice over IP) and instant messenger platforms. Next to these ways of staying in touch with friends and family, German online media is also mentioned as a way that many of the students relate to their country of citizenship (Figure 13).

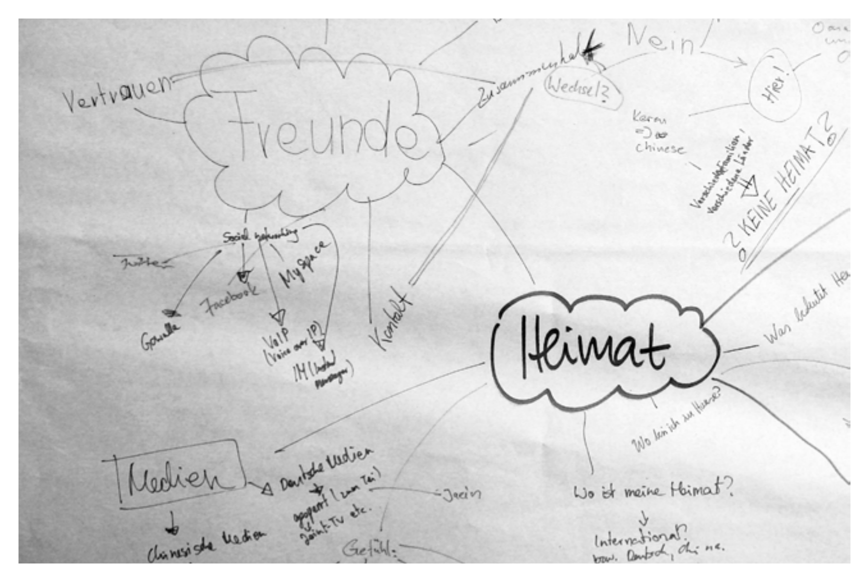


Figure 13. Section of Mind Map 2 on "Heimat." Drawing by four students.

Emotions such as feeling accepted or safe play a prominent role in their written discussions of home, with students noting that home is "where I can be myself," with "people who really know you," or that "home is where the heart is." Some remarks refer to individual aspects of and ideas about belonging, such as "everyone imagines home differently."

"Moving" is mentioned in connection to the question "Does 'home' change?" Other comments simply inquire "no home?" or "homeless?" On one poster, students ask "What is homeless?" and answer their own question with "when you feel you are wanted nowhere and have no relation to any specific place" and "neither place nor people."

"Heimat" evokes various associations and questions among students. The students make it clear that it is something they continuously negotiate and relate to "childhood," "family," "friends," "nationality," "media," "everyday

practices," "experiences," "memories," and "feelings." It seems that, through moving, contemplating the notion of home becomes even more relevant. The next sections therefore look at several individual students' thoughts about and negotiations of their subjective ideas of home.

STUDENTS' POSITIONS ON HOME AND BELONGING

Home is often associated with stability and continuity, as the following quote from sixteen-year-old Arnaud, whom I introduced earlier in Part I, Chapter 4.3, demonstrates:

> ARNAUD: *You think it's gonna be the same all your life. And you want it to stay that way and not change. I was nine years old and I had my friends and my… Cause I was in France, in Paris, in a small city called, not even a city, it's just between a city and a village.*
> INTERVIEWER: *Yeah. A suburb?*
> ARNAUD: *Exactly. And so I knew lots of people around. It's really, you feel like home a bit. At nine years old. And then you come to China and it's a huge city, and you say "oh." The style of life, there is a big change in the style of life.*

However, due to the fact that continuity and "everything staying a certain way" is not a given for children moving transnationally, many of my interviewees have difficulty pointing out what home is to them. Japanese student Kazuo, whom I interviewed at the Singaporean school, explains:

> KAZUO: *Home is like, when you ask that question in Shanghai, like, in Shanghai. I have no home in Japan. So, I cannot answer my home is in Japan. In Japan, I always, like, <x> grew up in other places. So I cannot say "where are you from?" "Japan." I am not sure.*

Like Kazuo, the international students with their transnational ties and connections to multiple locations have to negotiate the term and find a way to go beyond prioritizing one place over the other. In the eyes of expatriate youths, home is nothing fixed or easy to define.

Some students deal with the problem of defining home by claiming home as "back home." For instance, eleven-year-old Allen, who has already lived in several places, sees his home tied to the current house his parents own in the US:

> ALLEN: *I'd say South Carolina, cause that's the house there right now. But I am originally from Chicago, Illinois, but I never actually, I don't have any memories in my brain about it.*

This definition of home is related to the way his whole family conceptualizes their stay abroad. His parents' influence, as well as how his family defines "home" as the house in the US, can be seen in his account of traveling back to the US in the summer and the consistent use of "we" in his narrative:

ALLEN: *One other disadvantage for me is, living in China is very far away from my home country. And where we have a house in the USA is the farthest it could be away from us, in the US. Because it is east of the US, so we have to ride a fifteen-hours flight home, and we have to ride another two-hour flight back to our house. And then plus driving hours.*
INTERVIEWER: *And plus the waiting hours in the airport. It feels like a whole day of traveling.*
ALLEN: *That is a long thing that we don't enjoy. All the flying.*
INTERVIEWER: *But that is still your home?*
ALLEN: *Yeah. I call it home.*

For seventeen-year-old Karina, Shanghai is her fourth city of residence. However, she prefers Prague, which she links to her friends' and family's presence:

INTERVIEWER: *But you feel comfortable in both places, somehow?*
KARINA: *I feel more comfortable in Prague. Because I have my friends and my family there. And I was simply born there. I spent the biggest part of my life there. And, yes, I have a much closer relationship to Prague than to Shanghai. Shanghai, I think, okay, I moved here because of my father and I get my diploma and*
goodbye. And then I maybe come back some time for my studies. But I always try to spend as little time here as possible. I don't know.[32]

Karina and Allen both actively maintain their ties to what they consider their true "home," Prague and the house in the USA. Shanghai is only a transitory space to them. Karina not only defines Prague as her home, but also Shanghai as a place where she tries to spend "as little time as possible." She points this out during a follow-up interview that I conduct with her one year after her initial move to Shanghai. Karina had difficulties with the "homing" process and, even after one year, limits her relationship to Shanghai to see-

32 German original: INTERVIEWER: *Aber du fühlst dich in beiden wohl, irgendwie?* KARINA: *In Prag fühl ich mich wohler. Weil ich da eben meine Freunde und meine Familie hab. Und ich wurde da einfach geboren. Ich hab da den größten Teil meines Lebens einfach verbracht. Und, ja zu Prag hab ich eine viel engere Beziehung als zu Shanghai. Shanghai, denk ich mir, okay, ich bin jetzt wegen meinem Vater hierhin gezogen und ich mach jetzt mein Abi und tschüss. Und dann komm ich hier vielleicht mal wegen meinem Studium her zurück. Aber ich versuch hier immer so wenig Zeit wie möglich zu verbringen. Ich weiß nicht.*

ing it as merely an aspect of her father's job. However, just before the interview she had returned from a summer in Prague and was really missing her family and friends there. In short, for some students, home is connected to "elsewhere," to necessary travel, and to missing people and places.

Keeping the migratory experiences of the young actors in this study in mind, it is not surprising to find that their transient relationship with Shanghai might make it difficult for some of these students to consider it home. Tamara, who was twelve years old when we talked during a group discussion at a British school, explained:

> TAMARA: *For me, I think I should call China home, because I feel more comfortable here than <x>. Erm, but I don't really know if China should be my home, because I think I will be moving somewhere else after three or more years.*

For Tamara—who grew up in Singapore and China—the fear of leaving, of moving on, makes it difficult to relate to Shanghai as home, even though she "feels comfortable" there. Shanghai can only be a temporary home, a transit space. Giovanni has a similar understanding. He describes himself as "feeling safe" and "a little bit like at home" in Shanghai,[33] but when he further reflects on the question of home, he argues that, although he has not lived in Switzerland—the country of his parents and nationality—for three years now, he would, nevertheless, call it home. His major argument is that he is only "temporarily" in Shanghai, "like a long holiday" (wie lange Ferien). Again, his quote shows how Shanghai is perceived as a transient space, a temporary home.

Giovanni's contemplations, however, also point to the possibility of having two homes simultaneously, Switzerland and Shanghai, an idea many students present in interviews. In her writings on diaspora, Avtar Brah (1996) answers the question of what "home" means with a conceptualization based on distinguishing "homing desire" from the "desire for homeland," which she sees as two different simultaneous processes and discourses (1996, 16):

> On the one hand, "home" is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of "origin." On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, somber grey skies in the middle of the day … all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations (Brah 1996, 192).

---

33 German original: GIOVANNI: *Aber eigentlich fühl ich mich hier ganz sicher. Und eigentlich auch wie zu Hause. Ein bisschen. Ich mag es eigentlich hier.*

Akin to Avtar Brah's two notions of home, eighteen-year-old Matthias explains: "I think, like, both are kind of home. Maybe right now I'd say rather here [in Shanghai] than Germany." Later, however, Matthias identifies home less hesitatingly: "For me. Germany." This seeming contradiction, having two homes, is not surprising. Students have the sense that they have to choose, to decide. Yet, they maintain emotional connections to both places.

Sixteen-year-old Mia's musings that I discussed above also illustrate Brah's conceptualizations of home. Her reflections on material practices and "home-making" in Shanghai have shown that, while she clearly considers where she lives as "at home" (Zuhause), her sense of where she truly belongs, of a true "home" (Heimat), is tied to Germany as a country, and is symbolized by the smell of bakeries. She comments on this dualistic concept:

> MIA: *You don't have a place where you can say, this is where I've spent all my life or big parts of my life. That's where I belong, because I have lived here [in Shanghai] the longest. But still I would… no idea… it is my home [Zuhause], but it's not my home [Heimat].*[34]

The distinction she draws in German between "Zuhause" and "Heimat," perhaps comparable to the English distinction between one's house and one's home, coincides with Brah's (1996) two formulations of home. However, discussing the matter further, Mia stresses that being at home is, due to her experiences, not only tied to a single place in her life, but is multi-local.

> MIA: *It's really like that! Also, if you go somewhere you have lived before. For instance, when I go with my family to Singapore. Even years later. You don't even have to remember it that well. Just at that moment when you are riding in a taxi and you look out the window and see these palm trees. That is simply home. It's as if you were coming home!* [35]

Mia's descriptions remind us that Brah's definition, although at first tempting us to see a dualistic form of home for migrants, encompasses the

---

34 German original: MIA: *Weil man hat einfach nicht einen Ort wo man sagt, da hab ich mein ganzes Leben verbracht oder Großteile meines Lebens. Da gehör ich hin. Weil ich hab jetzt am längsten hier [in Shanghai] gelebt. Aber trotzdem würd ich das, keine Ahnung. Das ist jetzt mein Zuhause, aber das ist nicht meine Heimat.*

35 German original: MIA: *Das ist aber wirklich so! Auch wenn man irgendwo hinfährt wo man vorher schon mal gewohnt hat. Also zum Beispiel wenn ich mit meiner Familie nach Singapur fahre. Noch Jahre später. Man muss mich noch nicht mal so sehr daran erinnern. Einfach in dem Moment wo du da fährst im Taxi, raus guckst, diese Palmen. Das ist einfach zu Hause. Das ist einfach als würde man nach Hause kommen!*

"double, triple, or multi-placedness of 'home'" (Brah 1996, 194). Brah's definitions of home have to be understood as applicable for multiple locations. This dualistic view of home, however, is wide spread in migration studies. When social anthropologist Steven Vertovec writes about the transformation, through transnationalism, of "the everyday social worlds of individuals and families in both migrant sending and receiving contexts" (Vertovec 2004, 974), he summarizes various concepts describing "practices of exchange, communication and frequent travel" (ibid., 974) among transmigrants under the umbrella term "bifocality" (ibid.). This "migrants' orientational bifocality" draws from concepts such as "bifocalism" (Rouse 1992), "life world" (Smith 2001), and Guarnizo's concept of a transnational *habitus* which is linked to a "dual frame of reference" (Guarnizo 1997, 311 cited in Vertovec 2004, 974).[36] While Vertovec's concept of "bifocality" may hold for many cases of migration, it is not applicable to all expat youths, due to their high mobility and bicultural families. While we note that, for these children, the terms "Zuhause" (at home) and "Heimat" (home) do not coincide, the following accounts will demonstrate the need for concepts which go beyond "bifocality" (Vertovec 2004, 974) and acknowledge multiplicity.

Jennifer Robinson (2010, 16) similarly stresses the importance of the imaginary in connections between cities, the "imaginative ways in which places are drawn together or kept apart." She therefore includes people who physically stay in one region in the process of connecting places when she argues that "residents are always in the process of preparing to leave for an imagined elsewhere, that they already know much about other cities or live [sic] an imaginary world that is both here and there. Within a topological imagination, making one's way in a city commonly entrains a wide diversity of other places" (Robinson 2010, 16). Robinson's argument, which I presented in the introduction and on which I expand here, shows that ties to other places are vivid in our everyday lives. Moving through and living in Shanghai is thus constantly tied to elsewhere. However, for expatriate youths, these ties are not only based on imaginary scenarios (centering on future places of residence or travel destinations), but on memories and sensory experiences from elsewhere. Due to their many moves, the actors of my study are able to constantly draw from their memories of other places. Marco, a student at the German school and the child of a Brazilian-German marriage, for instance, stresses his positive relationships to a multiplicity of places. However, he also emphasizes the difficulties he has conceptualizing these:

36 Habitus, as described by Bourdieu in "The Forms of Capital," can be understood as a person's unconscious embodiment of cultural capital over time (1986, 244–245). However, the term simultaneously characterizes the formative relations between individuals and their socio-cultural surroundings, as Bourdieu argues in his work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984, 170): "The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world [that] is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes."

MARCO: *I have lived in Leverkusen all my life. But we were also often at my grandparents, on one side [of the family] in the Black Forest and, on the other side, in Brazil. Yes, I have so much there that I feel very connected to both places, because we really spent a lot of time there. Usually we'd go there once a month, to my grandpa's in the Black Forest. And the whole summer vacation we'd spend in Brazil.*

INTERVIEWER: *In Brazil.*

MARCO: *Yes, and there, erm, now, I don't know. It's really complicated.*

INTERVIEWER: *<L>*

MARCO: *I have been living here for one and a half years now. And, erm, I don't know. I don't know where I feel more connected or what, now. My home [Heimat] is actually in Leverkusen. Yes, but I am living in Shanghai. I don't know. Somehow I can't express that.*[37]

In this interview, Marco openly voices his difficulties explaining his attachment to several places at once. His comments read as if the questions about where home is pressure him to make a choice. At first refraining from using the word "home," he makes it clear that he feels connected to former places of residence as well as to the different places his family came from. He reluctantly uses the German term "Heimat" to refer to the city he grew up in, only to immediately state his uncertainty about this choice and to make it clear that he cannot state preferences or put his relationships with those places into words. His life is embedded in a network of different places in which family relations play a key role.

Paul, whose case I presented in the Introduction, is also the child of a mixed-nationality marriage, and similarly grew up in several places, although he and his parents moved more often. In contrast to Marco, Paul describes his multi-local experiences by stating his non-attachment to places. He defines home as "wherever I am staying."[38]

---

37 German original: MARCO: *Ich hab halt mein Leben lang in Leverkusen gelebt. Wir waren aber auch oft bei meinen Großeltern, einerseits im Schwarzwald und andererseits halt in Brasilien. Ja da hab ich halt auch so viel, fühl ich mich sehr zu verbunden. Zu den beiden Orten, weil wir da echt viel Zeit verbracht haben. Wir waren da normalerweise einmal im Monat, bei meinem Opa, also im Schwarzwald. Und in den Sommerferien eigentlich die ganze Zeit immer in Brasilien.* INTERVIEWER: *In Brasilien.* MARCO: *Ja, und da, ehm, ja jetzt, ich weiß nicht. Das ist echt kompliziert.* INTERVIEWER: *<L>* MARCO: *Ja, ich wohn hier jetzt ja auch seit eineinhalb Jahren. Und ehm, ich weiß nicht. Ich weiß nicht genau, wo ich mich jetzt mehr verbunden fühle. Oder was ich jetzt. Meine Heimat ist eigentlich in Leverkusen. Ja, aber ich wohn halt in Shanghai. Ich weiß nicht, ich kann das irgendwie nicht so ausdrücken.*

38 INTERVIEWER: *So when people ask you where home is, what do you usually give as an answer?* PAUL: *I don't. <L> I don't say anything.* INTERVIEWER: *You don't say anything?* —PAUL: *[Pause] Or I say wherever I am staying. If I live here, I say here is home. [...] Yeah I guess here'd be home, because I wouldn't wanna live anywhere else.* As I have already described in the Introduction, home seems to be a vague idea for Paul, who attributes his attachment to Shanghai mostly to the fact that it is his current place of residence. His world is greatly in flux; a couple months after

Other students see their connections with multiple places as a potential status symbol. As Alex notes, when describing his experience to others:

> ALEX: *That is also bragging a little. And simply interesting, I guess. I would be interested in someone who has lived in Shanghai for three years.*[39]

Alex is proud of his expat lifestyle and ties his experience to cosmopolitanism rather than seeing difficulties with negotiating what "home" means. One could also describe Alex's classmate Kressi's outlook as cosmopolitan. Kressi, who was fifteen years old when I met her and who moved from Germany to Shanghai as a toddler, verbalizes her idea of home by tracing her relations to relatives and friends in other places and by fixing home as an emotional state.

> KRESSI: *It is this feeling. That's why I say "the world is my home." The whole world. The world is my home, because there is something. My uncle is in America. I like to go shopping there and love it there. And all my friends, who have now moved on, are in Germany.*[40]

Her simultaneous attachment to many places is based on people, practices, and emotions. These experiences of places lead to the feeling that she has a whole network of homes, which emerged from her family's multiple migrations over generations. Thus for expatriate youths, home is always multifocal: a connection of several places, people, and practices. These connections can be understood as "rhizomatic."

Hindman (2009b, 676) has compared the way "the expatriate family can spring from the soil again"—due to the tendency among expats to collect objects which help them articulate and recreate personal histories and positions in new places—to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's (1987) formulation of the rhizome. Such a rhizome, as these students' comments illustrate, is not only a connection of objects, but also of places, people, and practices. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) employ the image of the rhizome "as subterranean stem" to encourage a new way of thinking about the representation and interpretation of data and the production

---

the interview, he moved to Germany, while his parents settled in another part of Asia. This decision was mainly based on his wish to experience Europe, due to his being a German national, despite not speaking the language or ever having lived in Germany before.

39 German original: ALEX: *Weil das ist so ein bisschen angeben und so. Und halt auch, das ist einfach, interessant, denk ich mal. Also mich würde jemand interessieren, der irgendwie drei Jahre in Shanghai gelebt hat.*

40 German original: KRESSI: *Das Gefühl ist es. Deswegen sag ich auch: „Die Heimat ist meine Welt." Also das ist die ganze Welt. Also meine Heimat ist die Welt, weil da ist was. In Amerika ist mein Onkel und da geh ich gerne shoppen und ich liebe es da. Und in Deutschland sind meine Freunde, die jetzt weggezogen sind.*

of knowledge. They chose the image of the rhizome in contrast to that of "roots and radicles" which they see as having dominated our ways of analyzing thought until now (ibid., 6). Unlike a tree or its root, "which plots a point, fixes an order" (ibid., 7) the rhizome "connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states" (ibid., 21). It is in the same manner that the rhizomatic home includes different groups of people, practices, places, material goods, and senses of belonging. The rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari argue, underlies "principles of connection and heterogeneity" (ibid., 7) and may be broken, but is not hindered by breakage, since ruptures are inherent to it.

> Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another (ibid., 9).

This ceaseless connection despite ruptures is also visible in the students' perceptions of home—moves, as ruptures, do not interrupt feelings of belonging to places or people that, at first glance, seem cut off. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that a rhizome, which has no beginning or end, cannot be traced but only mapped (ibid., 12), because it is "always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (ibid., 25.). This in-betweeness of the rhizome, of the notion of home is, for Kressi, the child of second generation migrants from Hong Kong and Vietnam in Germany, who was born in Germany but grew up in Shanghai with transnational family ties to several places, simultaneously linked to challenges in cultural identity:

> KRESSI: *The thing is, some people can simply say: "I am from Germany, but I live in Shanghai." In a sense I am, yes, I am actually German. Because my Chinese isn't that good. I also have a German passport and I grew up as a German. But the problem is that I don't look German. And I look like a Chinese or something, but I just live here. But then Shanghai, nonetheless, somehow became my home [Heimat], just because everything I really know is here.*[41]

---

41 German original: KRESSI: *Das Ding ist, manche Leute können ganz einfach sagen: „Ich bin aus Deutschland, aber ich wohn in Shanghai." Bei mir ist es eigentlich so, ja, ich bin eigentlich Deutsche. Weil ich kann Chinesisch nicht so gut. Ich hab auch einen deutschen Pass und bin deutsch aufgewachsen. Aber das Problem ist, ich seh nicht deutsch aus. Und ich seh aus wie eine Chinesin oder so, aber ich wohn hier halt nur. Aber Shanghai ist dann doch irgendwie meine Heimat geworden, weil hier einfach alles ist was ich so wirklich kenne.*

Feeling at home is also tied to questions of identity and the right to claim a place as "home." "Not looking German," as Kressi puts it, thus makes the claim to Germany as her "Heimat"—according to Brah's first definition, the place of "origin"—difficult. Home is tied to the politics of identity and belonging, even for affluent, privileged migrants. In Brah's words:

> The question of home, therefore, is intrinsically linked with the way in which processes of inclusion or exclusion operate and are subjectively experienced under given circumstances. It is centrally about our political and personal struggles over the social regulation of "belonging" (Brah 1996, 192).

Kressi's quote supports Brah's argument that the question of home is tied to the "social regulation of 'belonging.'" She explains the difficulties her non-German looks, and the fact that she does not speak Chinese or own a Chinese passport, cause her in terms of defining her home to others. Nonetheless, Kressi also explains how processes of emplacement—"because simply everything I really know is here"—make Shanghai her home. Her emphasis that living in Shanghai makes her see the place as home resonates well with Brah's argument that "the double, triple, or multi-placedness of 'home' in the imaginary [sic] of people in the diaspora does not mean that such groups do not feel anchored in the place of settlement" (Brah 1996, 194). Additionally, Kressi's case shows that the idea of defining "back home" can become difficult.

For some of the students, especially those who move quite often and/or have parents of different nationalities, Brah's first understanding of home as "a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" (Brah 1996, 192) seems to become less important and a source of conflict within the family. Nine-year-old Jacob, the son of Malay parents, describes how he has difficulty seeing Malaysia as a place he could call home:

INTERVIEWER: *So what do you consider home?*
JACOB: *Everywhere.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>Everywhere</L>. Yeah.*
JACOB: *Cause there is not a lot of places, except for Beijing, that I stayed long enough to actually get really, really used to it. And also, maybe I shouldn't count Beijing, because when I was in Beijing, for the first few years, I was just a tiny thing and I wouldn't remember anything. And when we moved to a different place, besides China, like Bangkok, I totally forgot all my Mandarin. [...]*
INTERVIEWER: *So home is? [Pause] Everywhere?*
JACOB: *Yeah [Exhales loudly].*
INTERVIEWER: *Does that make it hard sometimes that home is everywhere?*
JACOB: *I don't know. Maybe I should say that home is Malaysia. Because, um, I actually have a house there. And once in a while we go back to our house, and well, just do some cleaning.*

INTERVIEWER: *So does it feel [like] home when you are there?*
JACOB: *No. Cause I have never slept there. And I have never used anything. Except I have seen all my old toys, [from] when I was much younger.*

Although Jacob was shown his birthplace and his old toys, he could not relate to them. For him, home seems to be tied to the idea of feeling emplaced, of "having slept there." His sister Emily has similar difficulties considering Malaysia her home. During an interview, she describes how she was looking forward to returning to Shanghai during a summer spent in Malaysia:

EMILY: *Like, when I go back for holidays […] I see my grandparents, my family. And then like… Sometimes you don't actually know where to go. Because you don't feel part of that place. Some people go back and they are like: "Oh I am at home!" And stuff like that. But, then, you eventually miss where you actually live every day. Like, I would miss coming, I would miss being here. So whenever I go back, like for summer. I went back for, like, a month. After three weeks I told my mom: "What's the date we are leaving?"*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
EMILY: *Mom tells me that day and I start counting the weeks. And my mom asks: "Why? Do you miss home?" "Erm, yeah." And then my brother goes: "What do you mean home? We are home." My brother just has a different concept.*

She further discusses her relationship with Malaysia during the interview:

EMILY: *So I basically never… Okay, I could say about myself I have never lived in Malaysia. And I can't speak a word of Malay. And English is my first language.*
INTERVIEWER: *Okay. So what do you usually answer when people ask you where you are from? […]*
EMILY: *I am from Malaysia. But, […] then the next question that will come every day would be like: "Can you speak Malay? Can you teach me some Malay?" Like: "Eeeeh, no."*
INTERVIEWER: *No. <L> So what would you yourself say? What is, like, home to you?*
EMILY: *I always say home is wherever I have a roof, in whichever country.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
EMILY: *So like, since now I live here, this is my home. I do have a house in Malaysia, but…*
INTERVIEWER: *It is not home?*
EMILY: *It's not home. […] It is such a hard question to answer that. Where are you from? Where do you live? Where is your home country? What is your town? And, you can't.*

Emily evidently does not feel "part of that place" that is supposed to be "home." Returning to Brah's concept, Malaysia can, in Emily's case, be seen as constructed in the first category of home, by the parents, as a "mythic place of desire" (Brah 1996, 192). However, when Emily arrives, she cannot call it home, because home—for her and her brother alike—is linked to Brah's second conceptualization of home as "the lived experience of a locality." When she discusses this on a meta-level by stressing that her brother "has a different concept," she only refers to her brother' still calling Malaysia home. That the siblings' difficulties to accept Malaysia as home can lead to intergenerational difficulties can be seen in the following narration by Emily:

EMILY: *The worst thing is the international week here. And they ask you to write a poem about your country. Or a story about your country. Sometimes I have to go up to my teacher and ask: "I don't know which country to pick."*

INTERVIEWER AND TWO OTHER STUDENTS: *<L>*

EMILY: *<L> And then my teacher will ask me: "Well, where have you lived the most?" And then I say "Beijing." Then she said, "fine, then do it about Beijing." And then I say, "But honestly I have, I don't really know what I did when I was young. I was only three." And she says, "Okay, where do you remember the most?" And I would say "Bangkok." So, then I would write about that. And then my mom would ask me, "Why did you choose that? You could have just come to me and ask about Malaysia." I said, "Yeah, but, it is not gonna be like my words, it's gonna be your words." And so my mom says, "Yeah you are right."*

INTERVIEWER: *Maybe your mom was sad that you didn't pick Malaysia?*

EMILY: *Yeah, cause I think, as a parent they have all lived in one country until they grow up. And then they move. So, I think they don't really know how it is like for the rest to move. And move and move.*

The siblings' discussion of their relationships to multiple places focuses on the intergenerational conflicts arising from their parents seeing Malaysia as their supposed "home" and the children's refusal to accept the idea of a fixed home in a world of flux. For expatriate youths, ideas of home and belonging can conflict with those of their family or with their nationality due to how their experiences and emplacement processes differ. The issue is further complicated when they feel that others could reject their claims of belonging due, for instance, to their physical appearance—as Kressi mentioned in her interview.

Some students, however, clearly see Shanghai as their home. Two students from the German School, Andrea and Antonia, both members of "the girls," refer to Shanghai as their home. Andrea links this claim to her having an everyday routine there. She explains how she feels after returning from summer breaks in Germany:

ANDREA: *I like coming back here. […] Now I can relax again. Now it is routine again. Now I don't have to live out of my suitcase anymore and so on. In a way, you come back home.*[42]

Antonia's point of view is similar to Andrea's; she emphasizes the "normality" of coming "home" to Shanghai even more.

ANTONIA: *How is it to come back from a vacation? Like for everyone else, I believe. <L> I don't think there is a big difference between us and other people. Just home again. I go to my house and say hello to my dog, my* ayi*, my house, my bed.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
ANTONIA: *There is no difference. Well, I don't know how it is supposed to be different from other people.*[43]

Andrea and Antonia both consider Shanghai to be their home due to their current residence and routine practices in the city. Antonia's statement, "I don't know how it is supposed to be different from other people," demonstrates how she has no difficulty defining the city as her home. Her answer also points to an underlying annoyance provoked by the question. This might be because she senses that my position as a researcher is based on a latent assumption that the mobile lifestyle of expatriates brings about difficulties, an assumption which she refuses to accept. Her seeming annoyance may be further related to the fact that, despite growing up in Shanghai, being fluent in Chinese, and referring to herself as "Shanghainese," as the child of a mixed-marriage and a German national, she might not be accepted as such. She attributes her diverse notions about feeling at home to her living in the city, although claiming that belonging in Shanghai often remains difficult as reciprocal processes of boundary drawing between "foreigners" and "locals" remain prominent. But, as Brah has argued, "it is quite possible to feel at home in a place and, yet, the experience of social exclusions may inhibit public proclamations of the place as home" (1996, 193). Antonia thus emphasizes the idea of Shanghai as her home, while possibly also feeling the need to convince me during the interview because my questions often considered the high mobility of students. Antonia, however, has lived mostly in Shanghai, and distin-

---

42 German original: ANDREA: *Ich find das dann immer ganz schön hierher zurückzukehren. […] Jetzt kann ich mich wieder entspannen. Jetzt ist wieder Routine. Jetzt muss ich nicht mehr aus dem Koffer leben und so. Man kommt dann auch nach Hause zurück eigentlich.*

43 German original: ANTONIA: *Wie ist es aus dem Urlaub wieder zurückzukommen? So wie bei jedem, glaube ich, also. <L> Ich glaub nicht, dass da ein großer Unterschied ist von uns wie bei anderen Leuten. Ist halt wieder nach Hause. Ich geh zu meinem Haus und sag meinen Hund Hallo, meiner* Ayi*, meinem Haus, meinem Bett.* INTERVIEWER: *<L>* ANTONIA: *Da ist kein Unterschied. Also ich weiß nicht was da anders sein soll als bei anderen Leuten.*

guishes herself from other expatriate kids by repeatedly stating that she grew up in the metropolis.

ANTONIA: *I think for me it is, I simply—*
INTERVIEWER: *You grew up here, didn't you?*
ANTONIA: *—grew up here.*
INTERVIEWER: *Sure.*
ANTONIA: *Others are only here for one year. And, erm, I don't think they are happy about having a traffic jam again.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
ANTONIA: *For me it is simply, well, I totally grew up here.*[44]

Talking about experiencing the city, I shared that I sometimes find Shanghai stressful, but she emphasizes again:

ANTONIA: *But, I don't know. I don't find it stressful. Because I am ... I think that is because I grew up here.*[45]

As Andrea's and Antonia's positions show, everyday practices and the desire for routine as well as (long-term) processes of emplacement contribute to students' claiming Shanghai as their home, and prioritizing the city over other places in their spatial networks. Nevertheless, while many expatriate youths may feel at home in Shanghai, public proclamations of the place as home remain difficult for them.

2.4 Concluding thoughts on home

> *A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 9).*

As these students' narratives and practices have shown, home is not only anchored to a place, but also tied to people (relatives, friends, and classmates), emotions (such as "feeling safe"), objects (such as furniture, photographs, and books), sensory impressions (such as bakery smells), and practices (like a family dinner). As Walsh succinctly states, "The home is experienced simultaneously as both a material and immaterial, lived and imagined, localized and (trans)national space of belonging" (Walsh 2006a, 123). Home is therefore not only a bifocal outlook on one's "homeland"

44 German original: ANTONIA: *Ich glaube, bei mir ist es auch so, ich bin halt hier* INTERVIEWER: *Du bist ja hier aufgewachsenen, ne?* ANTONIA: *aufgewachsen.* INTERVIEWER: *Na klar. Andere sind ja nur ein Jahr hier. Und ehm, ich glaub nicht, dass die sich darüber freuen wenn es wieder Stau gibt.* INTERVIEWER: *<L>* ANTONIA: *Also bei mir ist es einfach nur. Ja, ich bin hier total aufgewachsen.*

45 German original: ANTONIA: *Aber, ich weiß nicht. Ich finde es nicht anstrengend. Weil ich bin. Ich glaube das liegt auch daran, dass ich hier aufgewachsen bin.*

and "current home," as former conceptualizations suggest (see summary by Vertovec 2004), but a multi-focal one, a network of homes. I believe that these diverse connections can be best understood as rhizomatic in the sense that Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) understand it. As noted earlier, unlike a tree or its root, "which plots a point, fixes an order" (ibid., 7), the rhizome "connects any point to any other point," even if it is not usually classified as having a comparable nature (ibid., 21). It is in the same manner that the rhizomatic home connects different people, practices, places, material goods, and feelings of belonging. My analysis of the students' rhizomatic home therefore identifies and maps the following aspects:

First, concerning the localized and material space, the expatriate students themselves are actively involved in the creation of home. While they have difficulties claiming the communal spaces of the gated communities as home, they decorate their bedrooms and sometimes other domestic spaces or turn the house into home by initiating and taking part in family activities. In short, they transform the new site into a meaningful space. These home-making practices help them to not only claim the current place of residence as a kind of home, but also serve to identify places where they lived before as home. These different locations are often still closely connected. For example, I often witnessed that my informants' friends who used to live in Shanghai still came to visit, which helped to tie the new expat location to the old one.

Second, the rhizomatic home is not a mere network of multiple postings; instead, former and current dwelling places usually coincide with the presence of the nuclear family. It can therefore be said that, regardless of how "uprooted" the teenagers' networks of multiple homes may seem, the underlying hegemonic idea of "home" as the nuclear family staying together prevails in the majority of cases. Sometimes, as in Kressi's or Marco's situation, having a large extended family can be important in the creation of the youth's network of home. Melissa Butcher highlights the importance of transnational relationships for migrants as tools for demarcating identity and claiming a place of belonging:

> The shared meaning embedded in relationships reaffirmed the practices of identity associated with that place. [...] There is still an impulse to belong to a place that is marked by characteristics of familiarity and comfort, including elements of the national imagination. This is supported by the maintenance of particular relationships to confirm that this identity and its associated practices and values are shared and therefore of value (Butcher 2009, 1369).

Apart from the actual places where the students used to live, home is also understood as a feeling of connectedness and belonging.

Third, regarding the imagined and immaterial aspects of the rhizomatic home, my discussions have shown that teenagers continuously nego-

tiate belonging in relation to family members, peers, society, and many other factors, including material objects. While, for some students, mental images of home coincide with their parents' ideas or their nationality according to their passport, for others, the issue of belonging can become a matter of conflict. Some struggle to negotiate conflicting feelings such as the desire to claim Shanghai as their home while also feeling like they are seen as "an exotic animal" by Shanghai's other citizens, as Antonia describes, or handling conflicts with parents who consider home a fixed and definite location elsewhere, as shown in the discussions between the siblings Emily and Jacob. The problem of defining an emotional space of belonging can also lay in experiences of exclusion due to physical differences, as Kressi noted, when explaining her difficulty being accepted as German, due to her Asian phenotype. To expatriate students, the idea of home is thus also rhizomatic because it is "always in the middle, between things" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 25), and the concomitant feelings of belonging and positions of cultural identity often are as well.

Finally, home can also be related to feelings of "missing." Homelessness, as mentioned on all the students' posters, and homesickness, as described by Karina who misses Prague and her network there, or by Mia who misses practices like the family dinners she used to participate in, are thus also part of the overall "homing" process.

Based on the idea of the rhizome, this chapter concludes that, for many expatriate youths, home is always multi-sited and constantly in progress, as well as negotiated in relation to others. These findings can be related to the concept of TCKs (Pollock and Van Reken [1999] 2009) and to Franke's (2008) study mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. However, the rhizomatic home is also tied to concrete sites, physical belongings, and practices. While privileged migrants might be used to a home in flux, place nevertheless holds an important role in their lives. One concept investigating migrants' mediating processes of belonging and the relationships they form between various spaces that fits the experiences of these expatriate youths better than the TCK concept is David Conradson and Deirdre McKay's (2007) theory of "translocal subjectivities." Conradson and McKay argue that mobility in particular "provides opportunities for new forms of subjectivity and emotion to emerge" (ibid., 168). In order to understand these emerging emotions and understandings of the self, the authors suggest adopting the concept of translocal subjectivities based on Appadurai's (1996) notion of translocality. This concept aims "to describe the multiply-located senses of self amongst those who inhabit transnational social fields" (Conradson and Mckay 2007, 168). The authors understand translocal subjectivities as "emerging through both geographical mobility and multiple forms of ongoing emplacement" (ibid.). Additionally, these translocal subjectivities are often based on migrants relating to specific localities, rather than nation states; thus their positioning, relationships, and experiences become more translocal than transnational (ibid., 169). Finally, Conrad-

son and McKay maintain that translocal subjectivities are shaped by "the emotional and affective states accompanying mobility" (ibid.). All of these aspects describe the subjective experiences these expatriate youths provided in their narratives.

Relating to the last aspect, the impact of emotions on these youths' relationships with their current residence can also be traced in their home-making practices, which can be seen as coping mechanisms. These behaviors, making and (re)imagining homes, and collecting belongings to produce a sense of belonging, help the youths deal with feelings of loneliness and enable them to let the rhizomatic home, to return to Deleuze and Guattari, "start up again" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 9).

When it comes to coping with feeling uprooted, and the often conflicting feelings about home that this chapter discusses, children and youths tend to draw from the resources provided by their new school. It is in these schools that they receive further support, especially from their peers, to deal with such challenges. The following chapter explores the spaces of international schools and their role in the process of creating a community for students and their families.

CHAPTER 3
Building Community: The Role of International Schools

School is actually the most important thing here. During the week we spend our entire time here.[46] *(Giovanni, seventeen years old)*

Here, friendships only form through school.[47] *(Bjorn, sixteen years old)*

You only have this one environment, the school.[48] *(Peter, eighteen years old)*

With remarks similar to those of these three teenage boys, all of the students I interviewed confirmed the importance school played in offering them the opportunity to make friends and fight loneliness, while also offering a sense of continuity. School provides a space to establish a new social circle outside the family. Eleven-year-old Allen explains the role of the school in the following way:

ALLEN: *Depending upon what your everyday life is like, for instance, if you live near lots of Chinese people and you go to a private Chinese school, it makes a big impact. And then if you go to an international school, it makes the moving a lot easier. Because everyone there, they're in the same, same space as everyone else around them, from moving from their home country to somewhere other than their home country. And also because of the communication, because it is easier to communicate than with a lot of Chinese people.*

What is this experience that Allen describes as everyone being in "the same space?" What constitutes this space that schools provide, where, according to Allen, communication is easier and everyone feels unified by a common experience? This chapter attempts to answer these questions by examining the sites, values, practices, and students' experiences within international schools in Shanghai.

The chapter begins with a description of the international schools in Shanghai and their common characteristics. Next, by describing a short movie that was produced by two students at a German school, I provide a detailed example of the efforts schools make to create a sense of community (at which they are the center). In the third section, I argue that

46 German original: GIOVANNI: *Die Schule ist ja eigentlich das Wichtigste hier. Wir sind auch unter der Woche die ganze Zeit eigentlich hier.*
47 German original: BJORN: *Freundschaft geht hier nur über die Schule.*
48 German original: PETER: *Man hat hier nur dieses eine Umfeld, die Schule.*

these different school "communities" all see themselves as part of a larger unifying expatriate collective, where everyone is in the "same space." I show how this "expatriateness" is learned, maintained, and performed along three aspects that were particularly prominent during my fieldwork: the common comfort lying in the norm of having a maid and a driver, the social concern cultivated through practices of charity, and the distinctions maintained through cosmopolitan cultural capital. Finally, I investigate the youths' own experiences of attending an international school in Shanghai by contending with two topics which dominate their narratives: privilege and pressure.

3.1 Shanghai's landscape of international schools

The private international schools in Shanghai are places of central importance for expatriate youths. Upon analyzing these schools, not in terms of their academic curricula or achievements, but as particular places, they can be characterized by the five following attributes: their exclusion of Chinese students, the exclusion of foreign students without the financial means to meet high tuition fees, their geographical locations in the suburbs, their strict regulations and well-guarded gates, and their roles as expatriate community centers. I will expand on these points, and the last two aspects in particular, to illustrate the role of the school in (teenage) expatria.

The first main characteristic of the international schools in Shanghai is that students with Chinese passports are excluded. International schools form a distinct sub-sector. Within this sector, schools can be divided into foreign-run schools and divisions of local schools. Both are targeted solely at foreign passport holders. Shanghai's numerous international schools differ in their curricula, teaching language, type of diploma offered, student body nationalities admitted, and form of organization. Yamato and Bray (2006, 79) found that "the English-medium schools were more international because they used a language that has wide portability." This point is in keeping with my findings: at the French and German-medium schools, students represented considerably fewer nationalities than at their English counterparts. While Chinese government regulations prohibit local children of Chinese nationality from enrolling at any of these international schools (Yamato and Bray 2006, 64), the Shanghai municipal authorities can grant exceptions to special cases. During my research, however, I only met one student who had been granted this permission.[49] The resulting absence of locals therefore seems to be a major difference between the international schools in Shanghai and those elsewhere (see Dobeneck's (2010, 115–118) descriptions of German-medium schools in Sao Paulo, for example).

---

49 Xia was the only Chinese passport holder I met who was also enrolled at the German school; his experience is discussed further in Part I, Chapter 4.4.

International schools in Shanghai all charge tuition fees. This is also the case for schools that are run by non-profit agencies. Their tuition fees for the 2010–2011 school year ranged from approximately RMB 88,500 to 240,000 (€9,735 to €26,400) per year at the high school level. In many cases, tuition costs are covered by the expatriate packages provided by the parents' employers. Some schools offer different fees for families paying through private means. However, the second main characteristic of the international schools in Shanghai is that they exclude students whose parents cannot afford the tuition fees.

Yamato and Bray found that the schools they studied, and the English-medium schools (2006, 59; 79) in particular, were in competition with each other. In consequence, they try to find their own niches, sometimes also through location: "Schools can increase their market shares by securing premises in the suburbs in which their potential clients are concentrated" (ibid. 2006, 59). The choice of school and the choice of housing area are therefore connected. Thus a third main characteristic of the international schools is their location on the outskirts of the city, in the vicinity of the spacious gated communities described in the previous chapter.

Finally, international schools are highly regulated and sealed-off spaces. It is not surprising that human geographers of youth stress that the space of the school is under-researched (Valentine 2003, 42). Studies involving minors and closed institutions are complicated by difficulties of access. Many of my own email inquiries remained unanswered, even though I included letters of references, research outlines, my résumé, and other information. Whenever I had opportunities to meet principals in person, they were usually in favor of my research project, although the disruption of school activities and regular classes was a concern. Some schools, like a British international school located in Pudong, supported the project by contacting students and parents and letting me conduct interviews with them on the school's premises. A German school's staff was even so kind as to let me sit in on certain classes. A Singaporean school principal and teacher were also supportive and found a solution that included me teaching a Theory of Knowledge class and allowed me to conduct interviews. An American middle school's counselor allowed me to see the school facilities and meet teachers at a career development day for staff. Interviews with students, however, were denied as the school objected to the perceived organizational effort that would be required. The only other personal contact I had was with the principals of another American international school. Here, although one language teacher and six of her students were eager to participate, the school management objected. We had to cancel the interviews despite students', parents', and teachers' agreements. However, I learned much about the same school by visiting one elementary class in another capacity. Although another British school never replied to my inquiries, I had the opportunity to see their campus during a volunteer activity. For the students from a French school and an American Christian school, the path was different, as their friends whom I had interviewed

earlier introduced me to them. I conducted these interviews outside of school and thus without any discussions with the schools' management. As the German and French schools I visited are on the same campus, I had the opportunity to acquaint myself with the French school's setting. I did not have the opportunity to see the campus of the American Christian school, though. I also contacted numerous other schools, from which I never received an answer or which I simply could not include for consideration, due to constraints in time and resources.

All of the schools are located on the outskirts of the city and have fenced-off campuses with regulated access to their spaces. At every school I visited, I had to get a visitor's pass before being allowed to enter, which I then had to wear around my neck for the day. Policies varied from providing your name, phone number, and the name of the person to be visited, to requiring identity checks and body temperature controls for health reasons. Some of the schools, such as an American school I visited in Pudong, even have a second wall around them because they are located within gated communities. The following image, which depicts this gated community, is included to give an impression of international schools' surroundings (Figure 14). However, as the security guards in front of the school prohibited me from taking photos of the school itself, and in order to keep institutions anonymous, I cannot show specific buildings.



Figure 14. A Gated Community Hosting an American School. Photo by M. Sander.

These experiences of efforts to regulate access are of course less obvious to students than they are to a researcher or outsider. However, schools with their dress codes (some schools require uniforms), schedules, and scheduled breaks are well-regulated spaces for the students as well. Students from the German and French campus have to enter and exit the

school premises through doors equipped with card readers. Only the upper-grade students can exit these during the school day. However, sometimes students sneak around these, risking the punishment of having to work in the cafeteria.

> KARINA: *Some for instance don't pass through these check points, but through this door instead. It is usually open. They just walk through it. The Chinese that stand there, they don't pay attention. That's why, because it's open, you don't need this card. They keep on introducing new things, like blocking the cards, but the students always come up with a new way to break out of school <L>.*[50]

The fifth aspect of international schools in Shanghai is their role as community hubs. Students' lives obviously revolve around their schools as places of education, friendship, and after-school activities such as sports or artistic hobbies. However, in many cases, the international schools in Shanghai seem to be not only central to the children, to for the adult expatriate community as well. It is not surprising that a popular parental guidebook for expatriates strongly advises parents to become active at the school:

> Finally, I want to stress again the importance of getting involved with your child's new school in an overseas setting. Not only will your child find this a positive sign of your interest in them, but your involvement in the school community is a wonderful way to help create a new "extended family" for celebrating holidays far from home, traveling within the country, or just getting together with other parents to compare notes on the weekend. If you stayed away from parents organizations before you moved abroad (and let other parents handle all the volunteer work that enhanced your child's life), now's your chance to repay that debt (Pascoe 2006, 142).

Many schools offer social activities where parents can meet, or cultural activities that everyone (or at least everyone associated with the school) can participate in. Some schools are more ethnically focused in their activities and networks than others, but all have parents' organizations and provide cultural activities, such as plays, dances, bazaars, sporting events, or orientations. Schools also sell branded items such as yearbooks, T-shirts, or school bags. Fiona Moore (2008), who examined the German school in London (Deutsche Schule London, abbreviated here as "DSL") from an

---

50 German original: KARINA: *Aber manche, die gehen zum Beispiel auch nicht durch diese Schalter durch, sondern durch die Tür da. Die ist meistens immer offen. Die gehen einfach durch. Die Chinesen die da stehen, die achten da ja nicht drauf. Deswegen, weil die einfach offen ist, da braucht man diese Karte nicht. Man führt immer irgendwas ein, die Karten zu blockieren, aber den Schülern fällt immer irgendwie ein Weg ein, um aus dieser Schule auszubrechen <L>.*

adult perspective, found that it serves a central role for the German community. "One of the DSL's explicit functions is a site for the adjustment and development of networks of the spouses of expatriates, with a particular focus on female spouses" (Moore 2008, 94). She furthermore argues that this important connection in the network for German expatriates in London "not only educates the children, but also provides a forum for the expression of Germanness" (Moore 2008, 91).[51] The international schools in Shanghai obviously create similar important ties within the expatriate network, solidifying its role as what Simon Turner described as a "safe haven:"

> However, mobility does hold the potential for creating liminality: a space of indeterminacy where established structures are put out of function. It is in these situations of indeterminate meaning that some institutions—such as the family—are put under pressure and forced to change […] while others—like some religious and political movements—seem to flourish, lending themselves to the creation of new identities while guaranteeing some stability. Appealing to the anxieties of mobility, such institutions may provide safe havens while being immensely transnational themselves (Turner 2008, 1052).

While schools seem attractive when presented as such "safe havens," their exclusionary practices also have to be kept in mind—an aspect that this metaphor problematically conceals. As major nodes in the expatriate networks, schools have a strong influence on the expatriate way of life. The British school I visited, for example, provides a "Shanghai resident map" that, in addition to the school campuses, includes the location of compounds, foreign-run medical centers, churches, shopping locations, spas, cinemas, and restaurants that have become favorites among expats. The German school provides lists of popular residential compounds online. While some school communities, such as the German school, are strongly tied to national communities, they all, however, see themselves as part of the larger expatriate community. The expatriate experience is a unifying framework based on the construction of a shared concept of expatriate identity that transcends the national, cultural and ethnic differences among the various expatriate communities in Shanghai. In the following section, I provide a key example of the schools' pivotal and well-guarded role at the core of the larger expatriate network in Shanghai, by zooming in on the German school, the site of the largest portion of my research.

---

51 It is also likely that my own German ethnicity facilitated my access to the German School.

3.2 Image and community

The international schools actively support processes of national as well as international expatriate community building through various means and see themselves as major centers in Shanghai's expatriate communities. One project, produced by two students at the German school, exemplifies the efforts such schools make to encourage the idea that communities revolve around them. The project, a short video produced by the student Kressi and one of her friends, was made to be shown at an awards ceremony in Berlin.[52] The roughly five minute video opens with an image of the school's logo and motto, followed by a black screen, and the announcement "präsentiert" (presents). The next sequence shows impressions filmed out of a moving car. The color of the vehicle and the driver's taxi license reveal what locals would recognize as a typical Shanghai taxi. A title then fades in to announce what the clip presents, "My Time is Now: Das Zeitprojekt" (The Time Project), a reference to an art project for which the school won a prize, as is further introduced in the next caption: "Kinder zum Olymp!—Sonderpreis-Gewinner 2011" (Children to Olympus—Award Winner 2011). These images and texts are accompanied by melodic whistling, the beginning of the song "Home," by Edward Sharpe & The Magnetic Zeros. When the lyrics start, "Alabama, Arkansas, I do love my ma and pa," the taxi ride changes to blurry images zooming in on Shanghai's Bund and a Chinese flag, while a caption in white letters introduces "Shanghai, China, 上海." Despite being targeted at a German audience, the Chinese characters are included in the caption, presumably to emphasize the school's special or even "exotic" location. The words then make room for images. The flag and buildings become increasingly clearer. The viewer realizes that the camera is zooming in on the Bund with its iconic buildings. While the Bund is still a blurred image, we read "21 Millionen Einwohner" (21 million inhabitants), which then fades and reveals the full, now-focused image of the new Pudong side of the Bund. A photo of overpasses and traffic signs, with high-rise buildings in the background, follows. Inserted text which appears and fades out again simply reads: "modern" (Figure 15).

The subsequent shot shows a temple yard with people burning incense; the caption now reads "traditionell zugleich" (traditional at the same time). Images of the old lane houses in Taikang Road are next, blending into a picture of metro signs and then again of high-rise buildings with the caption: "dynamische Wirtschaftsmetropole" (dynamic commercial metropolis). The white letters fade, the skyscrapers become sharp and then quickly dissolve into numerous squares that turn around to reveal an image of the school building. While the school building appears,

52 The competition "Kinder zum Olymp!" is organized by the cultural foundation of the German federal states in coorperation with the Deutsche Bank Foundation. It grands awards to individual art projects as well as schools with strong arts-oriented profiles that manage to include the arts in everyday school life.

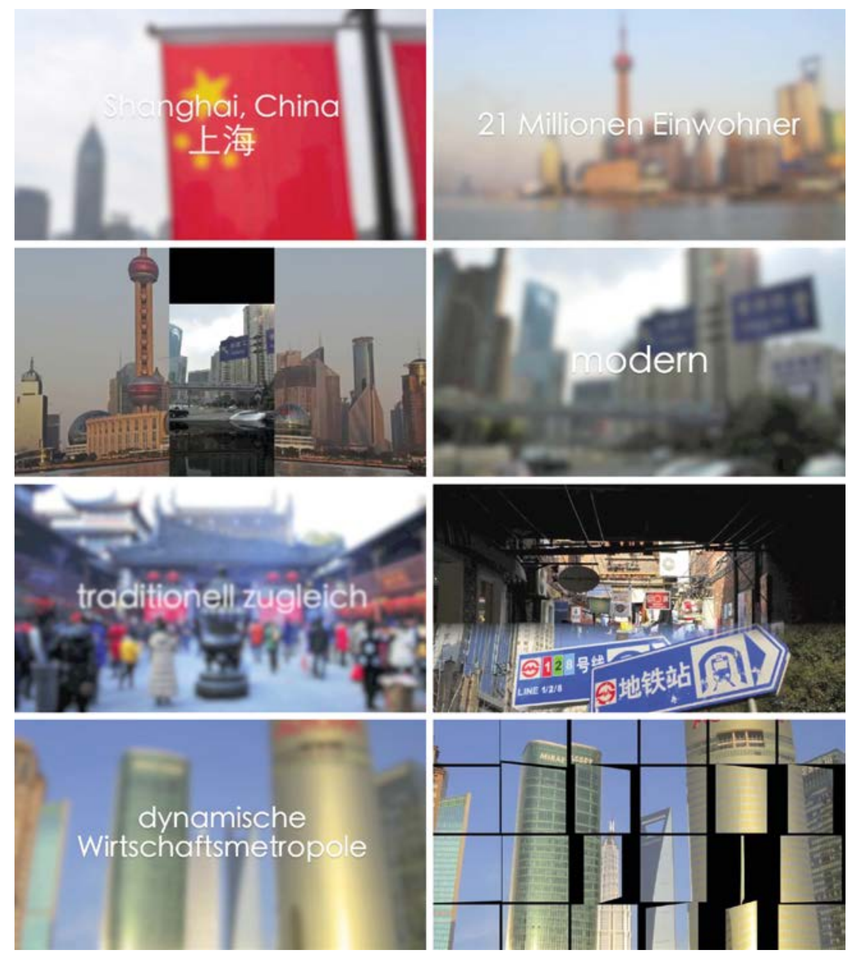


Figure 15. Images of Shanghai. Screenshots from the students' video, 0:19, 0:23, 0:25, 0:26, 0:29, 0:37, 0:42, and 0:45.

blurs, and comes into focus again, letters boldly announce: "Zuhause" (Home)—(Figure 16a).

This image is followed by recordings of students entering and leaving school, played in fast-forward, with a new text line appearing, continuing the message from the last image: "Für 1230 Schüler an zwei Schulstandorten" (For 1230 students on two campuses). We then, still in fast mode, enter the school premises, while the song continues: "Home, home, home, is wherever I'm with you." (Figure 16b).

Inside the school, we can observe, for a few quick moments in fast-forward mode, the daily business of students running around and parents picking up their children. Then a series of photographs follows, introducing the viewer to numerous school projects and events, such as music workshops, concerts, art projects (I will further explore one such project by

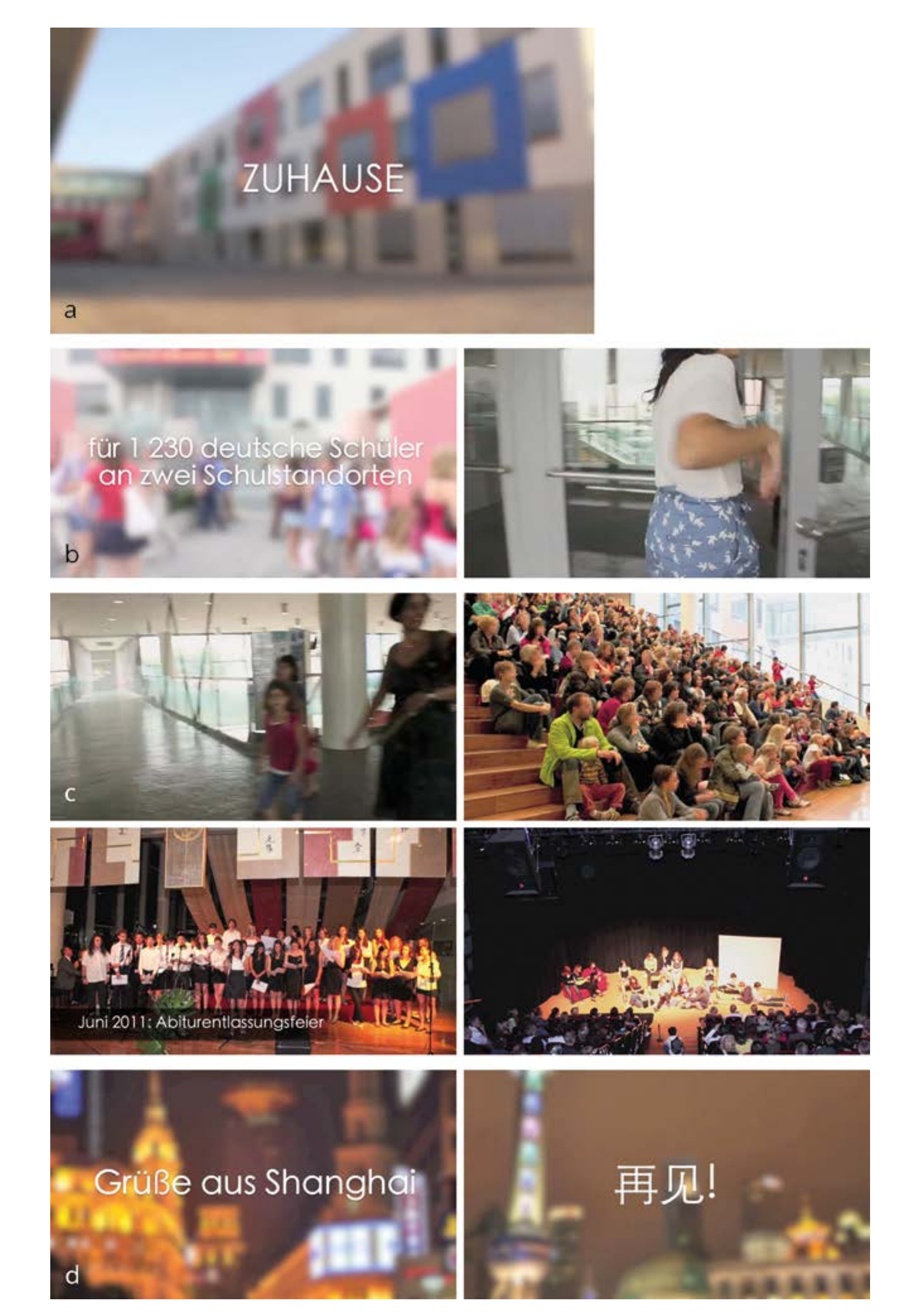


Figure 16. Screenshots from the student's video; a) "Zuhause," 0:48; b) Entering the School, 0:53 and 1:00; c) Events and Audiences, 1:02, 1:17, 1:41, and 3:54; d) "Greetings from Shanghai," 4:23 and 4:28.

the student Andrea in Part IV, Chapter 1), yearbook awards, theater, and the graduation ceremony (Figure 16c).

Four of the almost five minutes of the video present numerous activities, but do not offer any insights into the daily routines or regular classroom interactions that shape everyday life at school. Here, the school is presented as an active, arts-oriented, lively community, not only depicting numerous projects and students, but also different audiences at the events. At the end, the video clip takes us back to the Bund, this time at night. The city of Shanghai, depicted in the beginning and at the end, thus frames the images of the school, staging the campus—which could be anywhere—as international. These last shots are then headed with captions that bid the viewer "Good bye!" in Chinese and "Greetings from Shanghai" in German, to then finally return to the school's logo and motto from the very beginning (Figure 16d).

In the video, the institution is staged as a lively community framed by recognizable, even clichéd images of Shanghai. When talking with student Kressi about the production of the video, it becomes clear that it was filmed with the intention of representing the school's art class on the one hand, and the school as a whole on the other.

> KRESSI: *Everything had to be in it. The Fine Arts Center, all the events that took place, and some information about our school. So that we simply show what our school actually does in terms of cultural life. What it is generally like, how many students are here.*[53]

Kressi and her friend were happy to shoot the movie on behalf of the school because she enjoys being creative, but also because it enabled her and her friend to get the chance to spend a weekend in Berlin. The movie therefore is not only a creative project by two teenage girls, but also a public relations product that was requested by the school, which in turn funded their trip to Europe. However, while the school decided which events and art and music projects were to be depicted, it was the two girls who chose to accompany the images with the song. When I asked her about the choice of music, Kressi explained:

> KRESSI: *Well, we looked through [our music] and we just somehow liked the song. The home, in fact. And it was somehow, I don't know, erm, it is also somehow like Shanghai is only like it is because of the people, or because of the people we know. And that's why*

53 German original: KRESSI: *Da musste halt alles drin sein. So Fine Arts Center, und diese ganzen Events, was da halt war und auch so ein bisschen Informationen über unsere Schule. Einfach das wir mal zeigen, was unsere Schule eigentlich so an Kulturleben macht. Wie sie generell ist, wie viele Schüler hier sind.*

> *the song just fit really well. Well, we also liked the beat and we could cut the images along with it nicely.*[54]

For Kressi, school life is tied to her friends, and these friendships and connections create a feeling (in the words of the song) of home. The people, everyday practices, and ideals presented in the video produce, in a reciprocal process, the image of the school as being central to the community.
In this process, the school's material culture also plays a role. Gerd Baumann and Thijl Sunier (2002, 34–36), in their detailed description and comparison of four different comprehensive schools in Paris, London, Berlin, and Rotterdam, see different national ideas of citizenship reflected in the ways the school premises are decorated and managed; the school gates in particular are seen as symbolic of the attitudes and practices each nation espouses, along with that nation's ideas of how to manage ethnic diversity and political engagement. David MacDougall's (2006) concept of social aesthetics, which I presented in the Introduction and now expand upon, emphasizes how this specific material culture—a school's premises, the equipment, and the regulations revolving around it—affects the students engaging with that environment on a daily basis. With the term "social aesthetics," he describes "the creation of an aesthetic space or sensory structure" (2006, 105). Aesthetics here do not mean notions of beauty or art, but a "wider range of culturally patterned sensory experience" (ibid., 98). MacDougall understands the social aesthetic field as a coalescence of different elements such as "objects and actions." Analyzing the social aesthetic field therefore means focusing on a specific community and its landscape—its material environment as well as the day to day practices taking place in that environment. MacDougall suggests, based on his work on the prestigious Doon School in India, that societies "may find in the sharing of a strong aesthetic experience a unifying principle" (ibid., 99). The social aesthetics in the spaces of the German international schools therefore can also be seen as serving to create the students' sense of belonging. MacDougall suggests paying attention to specific objects in relation to daily practices: "The social aesthetic field is never mutual or random: its patterning creates forces and polarities with strong emotional effects. Ordinary objects with which one comes in daily contact take on a particular aura, and this aura is augmented by repetition and multiplication" (MacDougall 2006, 111).

While this aura of repetition is not present in the video described here, which focuses primarily on community events, it is omnipresent in the everyday school experience of expat youths. This aura of repetition is, for

54 German original: KRESSI: *Also wir haben so durchgeschaut und dann hat uns das irgendwie sehr gefallen das Lied. Das Zuhause eben. Und. Es war irgendwie, ich weiß gar nicht, ehm, es ist auch irgendwie so ... Shanghai ist nur so wegen der Leute, oder wegen der Leute die wir kennen. Und deswegen hat das einfach mit dem Lied richtig gut gepasst. Also es hat uns auch gefallen vom Beat und da konnten wir gut die Bilder zu schneiden.*

instance, evoked by the routine of passing through the school gates with student IDs in the morning, seeking out one's place in the rarely changing seating arrangement in the classrooms, or waiting for the teachers. Specific structures further shape the social aesthetics, whether they be the precisely measured units of lessons and breaks, the rules of where and when to eat, the decision about who is allowed to take the elevator and who must take the stairs—a major issue at the Singaporean school I visited—or the regulations about leaving the premises. These routines provide the students with a sense of community. It is therefore not surprising that, only after comprehending all these rules—which were somehow self-evident to the students—I began to feel comfortable at the school myself (see my descriptions of a day at the German school in Part I, Chapter 2).

The school events (such as those presented in the students' PR film) help the school present itself as a true community by including parents and other (German) adults. I myself, for instance, gained access to the German school through such an event. Fiona Moore, in her article on the German school in London, shows that the network revolving around the school actively aims for the creation of a new generation of young German transnational actors, for example through providing students with internships at prestigious institutions (Moore 2008, 97). A sensitive look at the role of Shanghai's international schools reveals that they not only play a key role in creating a home or community for the students, but also promote general identification with other international expatriates. In other words, schools become powerful institutions for both educating and fostering a national or school community and shaping forms of belonging by unifying expatriates.

3.3 Learning and living "expatriateness"

The sense of an expatriate community is produced through various means under the strong influence of international schools. The creation of and belonging to expatria can be seen as diasporic forms of community creation and simultaneously understood as a class or habitus consciousness, rendered visible through everyday (material) practices, identity performances, and the accumulation of cultural capital. Before drawing on three cases from my fieldwork to support these arguments, I will briefly discuss the role of education in forming a community, class, or habitus and explain my choice of the term "expatriateness."

Johanna Waters, drawing on Butler (2003), argues that "education is inextricably linked to the existence and recreation of a middle-class habitus that includes a closely guarded sub-culture of 'community'" (Waters 2007, 480). In her article, "'Roundabout Routes and Sanctuary Schools:' The Role of Situated Educational Practices and Habitus in the Creation of Transnational Professionals," Waters (2007) examines the formation of transnational professionals in Hong Kong. Since children's education has been cited as a major reason for internationally-educated locals to leave Hong Kong,

her study focuses particularly on the role of international education and the complex familial strategies centered on it. Her case studies in Hong Kong and Vancouver suggest "the active creation of group boundaries and the cultivation and inculcation of an exclusive identity through segregation and similar education and migration experiences" (Waters 2007, 492). Waters' description of the creation of group boundaries provides a very different reading of the phenomenon that Pollock and Van Reken ([1999] 2009) present in their literature on TCKs, which sees the formation of these boundaries as a positive experience of healing and belonging for mobile youths. Education and habitus among the internationally-educated locals Waters studied in Hong Kong therefore create a group that is both spatially and socially distinct. While international schools and overseas schooling "is clearly the preserve of the wealthy and privileged," Waters also argues that "it is often used as a means of avoiding failure in the local (and far more 'challenging' and competitive) system." Waters concludes that education "plays a pivotal role in the creation of an exclusive and elite group identity" and that this distinctive group identity is "rewarded in the labour market" (Waters 2007, 494). German sociologist Michael Hartmann's research on social origin and educational trajectories among the business elite in Germany and France (Hartmann 2000) similarly found that a class-specific habitus is decisive—in a direct sense in Germany and, indirectly, through attending elite universities in France—for an individual's career. He argues that "it is a class-specific habitus that ensures the high stability of social recruitment" and that it "can forge a sufficient internal bond even without such an institutionalization of 'cultural capital' in education" (Hartmann 2000, 258).

The significance of a distinctive habitus in the creation of an exclusive class or community of transnational professionals is evident in my research in Shanghai as well. I argue that, just like the group of transnational professionals Waters (2007) studies in Hong Kong, the international education of expatriate offspring plays a major role in forging bonds and creating an exclusive group identity. The opportunity to attend an international school is an argument for the move, as well as the pride and status many families gain from the experience. A German mother of three children (ages seven to fourteen) whom I interviewed during my earlier fieldwork in 2007, for instance, explained how the option for international schooling influenced her decision to move to Malaysia and later Shanghai:

> GERMAN MOTHER: *One reason to move abroad is always that the children have the opportunity to learn English. Our children don't go to the German school, but attend an English school, an international school with an English curriculum. And we always find this quite good. There, they have the chance to broaden their horizons, to learn another language.*[55]

---

55 German original: DEUTSCHE MUTTER: *Ein Beweggrund ins Ausland zu gehen ist dann immer, dass die Kinder halt auch die Möglichkeit haben Englisch zu lernen.*

The young actors of my study, all in the process of receiving their formal education, are acquiring this distinctive habitus, best labeled as "expatriate," drawing from their education and different networks and contributing to their family's sense of belonging in the community.

I use the term "expatriate" here to refer simply to a network of mobile professionals and their families. Most expatriates might simply be (and see themselves as) "middle class" in their home countries. At first sight, Conradson and Latham's term "'middling' forms of transnationalism" (2005, 229) seems fitting.[56]

> What is striking about many of the people involved in these kinds of transnational travels is their middling status position in their countries of origin. They are often, but not always, well educated. They may come from wealthy families, but more often than not they appear to be simply middle class. In terms of the societies they come from and those they are travelling to, they are very much of the middle (Conradson and Latham 2005, 228).

I can easily identify with and categorize my own movement according to Conradson and Latham's understanding of "'middling' forms of transnationalism." However, there seems to be a difference between the expatriate families mentioned above and those whom I studied in Shanghai. While most of these families might be middle class "in terms of the societies they come from," they are certainly not middle class in China, where "they are travelling to." Their new lifestyle includes the service of maids and drivers, private schooling, regular international travel, and vacations. Their financial status is not comparable to that of the Chinese middle class.

The term "elite," nevertheless, proves difficult as well. I am hesitant to apply it to my research group because it is "a term of reference, rather than self-reference," as George Marcus (1983a, 9) has pointed out. Furthermore, the term "elite" is unsuitable for my research perspective due to its associated research tradition.[57] My focus on expatriate youths' voices, which

Unsere Kinder gehen nicht in die deutsche Schule, sondern die gehen auf eine englische Schule, eine internationale Schule mit englischem Curriculum. Und das finden wir immer ganz gut. Dass sie da die Möglichkeit haben ihren Horizont zu erweitern, eine andere Sprache zu lernen.

56 Conradson and Latham argue that research in transnationalism has overlooked these people, while often focusing on migrants moving between Central America, the Caribbean, and North America. The authors therefore propose a few examples of other forms of transnational mobility that they term "middling" and that "similarly involve repeated movement and the maintenance of enduring ties across international borders," such as studying or taking gap years or career sabbaticals abroad (Conradson and Latham 2005, 229).

57 In the 1980s, George Marcus summarized the research on the elite, whether taking a "pluralist view" or the "'power elite' view" (1983a, 13), as having "failed to pay systematic attention to the cultures and forms of life of those identified as elites" (ibid., 25). While, on the one hand, Marcus considered the anthropology of elites suitable to fill this lacuna in research, he, on the other hand, regarded

allows for the in-depth analysis of age-specific and subjective experiences of transnational migration, cannot simultaneously center on the "nature of the larger system in which it is meaningful to label them as elites" (Marcus 1983a, 13). Therefore, I find the term "elite" misleading for my analysis of the processes of community building, status, habitus, and class in the realm of the students' schools and their environment. These entangled negotiations of a community/habitus/class shall therefore, instead, be described as practicing "expatriateness."

The expatriate community in Shanghai is diverse in many ways and maintains inner divisions of class, ethnicity, and nationality. It consists of its many specific groups revolving around certain clubs[58]—which are often tied to nationality—institutions, companies, neighborhoods, and other organizations. Here, the international schools play a lead role. People connected to the German School, for instance, despite their differences, consider themselves a group, as one small community in expatria. Most youths and their families would, at the same time, also see a larger expatriate network as existing in Shanghai and, for example, by labeling various places they frequent as "expatriate," consider themselves part of Shanghai's overall expatriate community.

The making of this expatriate community can be viewed in the same way that anthropologist Cris Shore (2002) discusses the making of elites, drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) notion of distinction: "in order to constitute itself as an elite in the first place an elite group must develop its own par-

---

the earlier research frameworks of contrasting elites to the masses as "the least adequate for empirical investigation" (ibid., 13):

> For the ethnographer, relating elites to corporate systems, rather than to specific people, requires the ability to define closely observed subjects as elites, not in relativistic terms which would be appropriate for small-scale societies, but in reference to the total larger system in which they are elites. Thus, selection of elites as ethnographic subjects presupposes considerable prior knowledge or guesswork about the nature of the larger system in which it is meaningful to label them as elites (Marcus 1983a, 13).

Marcus also saw the term "in its manifestation as an Anglo-Amercian research tradition" (1983a, 25) as an "uncertain guide" regarding how it could be appropriately applied to research on elites in a range of different societies. Almost two decades later, Shore and Nugent (2002) edited another volume on the study of the elite in anthropology, which connects similar issues and questions, as in the anthology edited by Marcus (1983b). Shore and Nugent's volume further stresses the anthropology of the elite as "an exercise in political reflexivity" since it obliges anthropologists to position themselves "more self-consciously in relation to the wider system of power and hierarchy within which anthropological knowledge is constructed" (Shore 2002, 2).

58 For detailed insights into expatriate clubs and their role in everyday life, see Beaverstock's (2011) article "Serving British Expatriate 'Talent' in Singapore: Exploring Ordinary Transnationalism and the Role of the Expatriate Club." For ethnographic accounts of expatriate associations and clubs in the lives of female expatriates, so-called "accompanying spouses," see Fechter's (2007b) descriptions of the German Women's Association in Jakarta in *Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia.*

ticularistic set of interests, norms and practices to differentiate itself from the masses. It must achieve 'distinction'" (Shore 2002, 2–3).

Regarding the distinction of elite groups, Shore sees the question of "how they do this" and the examination of the "cultural resources they mobilise and the way they cultivate functions" as important issues for anthropology (ibid., 3). In order to understand how expatriate youths learn "expatriateness," I investigated spatial practices and other forms of everyday activities that serve to create a distinct collective expatriate identity. Exclusion and inclusion along ethnic lines also play a major role, as exemplified by the experience German student Don, who is of Chinese descent, shared (see Part III, Chapter 1) regarding his treatment by entrance guards at his friends' compounds. Undeniably, whiteness is one of the strongest markers for "expatriateness" (see also Part IV, Chapter 4).[59] However, there are many subtle practices of creating and maintaining "expatriateness," be it through sharing educational values or through creating demarcations from not only those "back home" but also from the local Shanghainese. I will use three examples that were particularly relevant during my fieldwork to tease out how "expatriateness" is performed, maintained, and taught among expatriate youths: first, the convenience associated with the norm of having a maid and a driver, second, the social concern cultivated through practices of charity and social outreach work, and third, the distinctions maintained through their cosmopolitan cultural capital.

EXAMPLE 1: EVERYDAY COMFORTS

> ANTONIA: *When I hear expat children talk, eh, then I think "what kind of shitheads are they?!" […] "My* ayi*, my driver." All these servants. <L> […] But it doesn't feel like that. It doesn't feel as if we were totally, no idea. That's not a chauffeur, with servants and so on. But it's just simply an* ayi *and a driver. It doesn't feel particularly [special].*[60]

Antonia, who grew up in Shanghai, recognizes the privileged ways of life Shanghai offers expatriate youths on one hand but, on the other hand, does not associate having staff at home with privilege or luxury; she sees

59 I will comment on the different experiences of white and Asian students in Shanghai in Part IV, Chapter 4, but it is beyond the scope of this study to focus on the topic of racism in China and within the expatriate community. I interviewed one black girl at the Singaporean school and a black female trailing spouse in 2007, but my material is too limited to address the experiences of black expatriates.

60 German original: ANTONIA: *[Wenn ich] Expatkinder reden höre, ey, dann denke ich: „Was sind denn das für Scheißkinder?!" […] „Meine* Ayi*, mein Fahrer." Die ganzen Bediensteten. <L> […] Aber es fühlt sich gar nicht so an. Also es fühlt sich nicht so an als wären wir so total, keine Ahnung. Das ist ja kein Chauffeur, und mit Bediensteten und so. Sondern das ist halt so eine* Ayi *und halt ein Fahrer. Das fühlt sich jetzt gar nicht irgendwie [besonders an].*

these circumstances as quotidian, as an ordinary part of life. Her double perspective, maybe triggered by my presence as a researcher, reminds me of Conradson and Latham's call to consider aspects of the ordinary underlying transnational mobility:

> Viewed from this quotidian angle, even the most hyper-mobile transnational elites are ordinary: they eat; they sleep; they have families who must be raised, educated and taught a set of values. They have friends to keep up with and relatives to honour. While such lives may be stressful and involve significant levels of dislocation, for those in the midst of these patterns of activity, this effort is arguably simply part of the taken-for-granted texture of daily existence (Conradson and Latham 2005, 228).

This ordinary comfort is usually put in perspective in comparison to life in the (parents') home countries. Giovanni, after his return from a summer holiday "at home" in Switzerland, for instance, replies to my inquiries about his experience of coming back to Shanghai by stressing the comfortable life Shanghai provides.

> GIOVANNI: *I then realize that life is quite comfortable again. Because the driver waits for you. Because in Switzerland you don't have that sort of thing. And then I actually realize again and again how comfortable life is here. That is actually the biggest difference, I think, that life here is much more comfortable. If you live in a city in Europe, you just have to do a lot yourself, I think.*[61]

His fellow student Andrea, during a follow-up interview around the same time, reflects in a similar way about her stay in Germany and her return to Shanghai.

> ANDREA: *Well, I found life in Germany this summer quite exhausting. You have to, well, life is just easier here. Life has much more luxury.*[62]

Marco, during a group interview with Peter in May 2011, comments on the high financial standing of expatriate families by comparing the mobile phones belonging to students at his former school with those of his school in Shanghai.

---

61 German original: GIOVANNI: *Ja, dann merk ich eigentlich, dass das Leben wieder ganz bequem ist. Weil der Fahrer dann wartet. Weil in der Schweiz hat man ja so was nicht. Und dann merk ich eigentlich immer wieder wie bequem das Leben hier ist. Das ist eigentlich der größte Unterschied, denke ich, dass das Leben hier viel bequemer ist. Wenn man in Europa in einer Stadt wohnt, muss man halt schon viel selber machen, denke ich.*

62 German original: ANDREA: *Also ich fand das Leben in Deutschland diesen Sommer ziemlich anstrengend. Man muss eben viel, also, hier ist das eben leichter. Das Leben hat viel mehr Luxus.*

MARCO: *You notice that the people here have more money. Well, I used to attend a public school in Germany. And there, erm, for example nobody had an iPhone. And here, about half of the class has one. That is a huge difference. You notice the differences. That people who come here are actually more like [that]. Or the families who come here, the fathers have higher positions and therefore more money.*[63]

Marco's comment directly addresses the privileged financial status that the expat community shares and how this can be seen in expat students' material culture, not only in their homes, but also at school. Housekeepers, drivers, and expensive electronic equipment make the financial privileges of expatriate life more visible and become the norm of a lifestyle that is associated with "luxury" or—in everyday practices—with "comfort." Marco, recalling how, in the beginning, he had objections to move abroad, states that he does not regret moving to Shanghai.

MARCO: *I think my life is better here than it would be in Germany.*[64]

Bjorn, only about six months after his move to Shanghai, in a group discussion with Don and Alex, admits that he sometimes feels uncomfortable with the expatriate lifestyle.

BJORN: *[I miss] acting a bit anti-social <x> from my environment. I used to be…*
INTERVIEWER: *Acting a bit anti-social <L>*
BJORN: *Yes […]. Especially among the Germans. Here, for example, teachers [stare at you/scold you] for coming to school in loose sweatpants <x>. And in Germany that wasn't a problem at all. One always wants a bit of the high life here. That's the problem. I can't deal with that.*[65]

---

63 German original: MARCO: *Man merkt schon, dass hier die Leute mehr Geld haben. Also, ich war früher auch an einer öffentlichen Schule. Und da war halt, ehm, zum Beispiel hatte niemand ein iPhone. Und hier, hat ungefähr die Hälfte der Klasse welche. Das ist halt schon ein krasser Unterschied. Man merkt schon die Unterschiede. Dass hier halt mehr so die Leute hinkommen, die auch so so. Oder die Familien hinkommen, wo der Vater halt die höhere Position hat und insofern mehr Geld hat.*

64 German original: MARCO: *Ich glaub mein Leben ist hier besser als es in Deutschland wäre.*

65 German original: BJORN: *[Mir fehlt hier ein] bisschen asozial Getue. <x> aus meinem Umfeld. Ich war ja in …* INTERVIEWER: *Asozial Getue? <L>* BJORN: *Ja. […] Gerade bei den Deutschen. Hier wird man zum Beispiel von den Lehrern [komisch angeschaut/ zurechtgewiesen] […] wenn man mal mit so einer weiten Jogginghose in die Schule kommt <x>. Und in Deutschland war das überhaupt kein Problem. […] Man will hier immer so ein bisschen high life. Das ist hier so das Problem. Damit komm ich nicht zurecht.*

Maybe their awareness of such everyday comforts—of the ease with which “luxury” or “the high life” is obtained—triggers the second element I observed as crucial for the building of collective expatriate identities: the engagement in charity work.

EXAMPLE 2: CULTIVATING CONCERN

The previous section shows that a certain amount of material wealth and displays of class status contribute to the meaning of “expatriateness,” a meaning that will dissolve if certain activities are not repeatedly performed and valued. “Expatriateness” is, therefore, also a performance (Goffman 1966) and one practice contributing to it is charity work. In September 2010, very early in my fieldwork, I consulted different websites providing help for expatriates living in Shanghai. I registered for an event called Interkom CityServe that was directed at teenagers. Interkom is a youth program at the Community Center Shanghai that offers various courses and activities for the expatriate community. At this event, different outreach organizations were presenting their work at the community center in the Jingqiao district and teenagers had the opportunity to contact these organizations in person and get involved in social outreach work in Shanghai. While initially impressed by the high turnout, I later learned, in conversations with students, that community work is part of the mandatory curriculum if you pursue an IB (International Baccalaureate). Social outreach work is thus a requirement for all students at many international schools.

I also registered for a so-called “sorting party” organized by the social outreach organization Rivers of Hearts, in October 2010. The organization had been collecting clothing donations over the last several months. During the six hours I spent sorting clothes to go to rural areas in China I was able to glimpse yet another part of expatriate life. Working at a table with three teenage girls from Taiwan, I learned through short conversations in-between the shouts of “Men winter? Women summer! Children winter!” and “What do we do with towels? Shoes? Hats?” that many of the students who attended the event had done so together for school, and were awarded credit points afterward. The students from the school where the three girls I worked alongside had come from were accompanied and supervised by a social worker from their school. While constantly running to bring clothes to the packing station or to get new piles of unsorted donations, I counted approximately 200 people attending the event, mostly teenagers, although young children from scout troops, as well as a group of American college students and a few older adults, mostly teachers, helped out as well. The clothes had all been donated by expatriates in Shanghai and the event was handled entirely by expats. At the beginning, everyone was in high spirits and convinced of the event’s good cause. Only toward the end, when the truck was packed and cleaning and tying shoes together were the last tasks to remain, did students start to leave, tired from their work (Figure 17).



Figure 17. Community Work: Teenage Boys Loading Donated Clothes and Admiring their Day's Work. Photo by M. Sander.

Although social outreach work was not mandatory at the German school that I focused on, the role of charity had also become an integral part of their community. When a devastating earthquake hit Japan in the spring of 2011, for instance, the older students organized a bake sale to collect money (Figure 18).



Figure 18. Bake Sale at a German School. Photo by M. Sander.

While observing the older students selling and the younger students buying the home-made cake—mostly baked by mothers—during breaks at school, I learned that the school principal himself had encouraged students to organize such an event. Such involvement on the highest administrator's part underlines the central role of the school in communicating the importance of and fostering engagement with social outreach work. Cultivating concern for the social and ecological problems of today's world is, therefore, not only part of schools' lesson plans; this concern is also expressed through charity work that simultaneously reaffirms collective expatriate identities as compassionate donors and managers of global problems. It is this claiming of a global outlook that particularly unites and fosters the expatriate community.

EXAMPLE 3: CONVENIENT COSMOPOLITANISM

When visiting international schools, I could not help noticing their preference for decorating school buildings with various national flags. Indeed, it was often these flags that enabled me recognize the school building at first sight (Figure 19).



Figure 19. Flags Used to Decorate at Four International Schools. Photos by M. Sander.

As the first and fourth image above show, the schools display flags, often representing all the nationalities of their enrolled students, not only outside, but also inside to decorate corridors. These banners are an element of the "social aesthetics" (MacDougall 2006) of all international schools. The pride taken in the internationality of a school community, rendered

visible for every student and visitor by these flags, is also mirrored in the students' narratives of international school life. When, during an interview in June 2012 (just after graduation), Kressi commented, as I had heard so often, on the internationality and diversity of her classmates, I suggested, in an attempt to be a bit provocative, that the German school might not even be considered very international, as most of the students who attended it were German. Kressi, however, insisted that it was, explaining:

> KRESSI: *The point is, it isn't the cultures themselves, rather the cultures in which the people have lived. And [...] this is also what defines them. They always had new knowledge. And there were always people who, so many people who saw new things, something you didn't know yet. Many things you already know as well, all people know, but somehow from other perspectives. And it is interesting how all this comes together, through stories and so on. It is not necessarily cultures, but everyone is so different here. You've simply had so many extremely different experiences. In my old class, for instance, there were two students who had moved almost every two years. And they were sixteen, seventeen years old, and had already been I don't know where in the world.*[66]

Kressi's description of the different "perspectives," "stories," and "experiences" students share due to the "cultures in which the people have lived," illustrates how she sees classmates as not simply being tied to one culture, but as individuals whose practices and cultural identities are shaped by a plurality that relates to the ideas of transculturation and the gaining of transcultural perspectives that I discussed in the Introduction. In the realm of school and education, however, I think students' experiences of processes of transculturation, of experiencing different places as crucial for "what defines them," can also be conceptualized as what German ethnographer Jana Binder defines as "globality" (Binder 2005). Binder interprets and summarizes backpackers' travel experiences in Asia and convincingly argues that long-term travelers develop their narratives of the trip along with their competence dealing with the challenges of a globalizing world. She calls these experiences and their representations—such as being in a certain place, experiencing

66 German original: KRESSI: *Das Ding ist halt, dass, ehm, es eher nicht die Kulturen alleine sind, sondern die Kulturen in denen die Leute gelebt haben. Und [...] das macht sie auch aus. Und die haben immer neue Kenntnisse gehabt. Und es gab immer Leute, so viele Leute die haben was Neues gesehen, was gesehen was du noch nicht kanntest. Vieles kennt man auch, also kennen alle Leute, aber von anderen Seiten irgendwie. Und das ist halt interessant, wie das halt zusammen kommt und von Erzählungen und so. Also es ist nicht unbedingt Kulturen, aber man ist hier so verschieden. Man hat einfach so extrem verschiedene Erfahrungen gemacht. Zum Beispiel in meiner alten Jahrgangsstufe gab es zwei, die sind fast jede zwei Jahre umgezogen. Und die waren dann halt mit ihren sechzehn, siebzehn Jahren schon, schon ich weiß nicht wo alles auf der Welt.*

oneself in a different environment, meeting people of other nationalities, or changing one's lifestyle—"globality." She further argues that this "globality" should be understood as a cultural resource in the Bourdieusian sense, as capital. Using the example of young backpackers, Binder shows how knowledge of contemporary processes of change and their associated discourses are turned into cultural capital and can be used advantageously (ibid., 215). Applying this understanding of "globality" to the moving practices of expatriate teenagers and their career prospects brings similar views to the fore. Accumulating experiences of different places is seen, by expatriate teenagers and their parents, as a symbol of status and competence. Luke Desforges (1998), who explores the ways in which British middle-class youths negotiate and build their identities through travel, claims (not unlike Binder) that young people convert the cultural capital they gather from their independent travels into economic capital in the workplace upon their return. Drawing on Desforges's study, Gill Valentine argues that, through their travel, youths "participate in a process of othering and constructing first world representations of the third world, while simultaneously earning themselves a privileged position in the West" (Valentine 2003, 45). As student Kressi argues, the exchange of the experiences of various places, cultural practices, and values within the school community provides students with a variety of "new things" and/or "other perspectives"—what Binder calls "globality"—as cultural capital. This "globality," however, does not describe the degree of integration and entanglement of global experiences—the processes of transculturation—but views them as experiences gathered for future benefit. Likewise, the experiences described by Kressi are seen, by many students, as helpful for gaining a privileged position in the future. As sixteen-year-old Lara phrased it:

> LARA: *And [my parents] decided that, later, an international school abroad on your CV will be well-received. If you speak foreign languages, several languages, this will go down well. Life experience, that you just see something different.*[67]

Lara's quote shows that growing up abroad and receiving an international education is linked to the idea of "globality" as cultural capital. Her way of imagining a future CV proves this particularly well. Nevertheless, the age-specific context has to be kept in mind, where parents play a major role in planning their children's lives and making decisions in their "best interest" (see, for instance, the discussions about the move to Shanghai described in Part II, Chapter 1). Some attributions to the idea of "globality"

67 German original: LARA: *Und [meine Eltern] sind halt zu dem Entschluss gekommen. Internationale Auslandsschule. Wenn man später, Lebenslauf kommt gut an. Wenn man andere Sprachen spricht, mehrere Sprachen spricht, kommt's gut an. Lebenserfahrung, einfach, dass man mal was anderes sieht.*

drawn by Binder's study on backpackers, such as the alternative experience of everyday life, and a special time for development and self-fulfillment are therefore not part of the expatriate youth's sense of self. Youths consider being abroad a part of everyday life. The conceptualization of "globality" as the awareness of cultural resources that fit into globalized ways of living and subsequently serve as an important identity resource, however, is applicable to expatriate youths in Shanghai. It is the school that helps to provide, foster, and turn the youths' global experiences into "globality" as part of their educational ambitions as well as part of establishing their community markers and values. As a result, these international schools ultimately foster an international community that can see itself as open-minded, diverse, and cosmopolitan without specifically including the local neighborhood, Shanghai, or China. These latter places are merely used as stages on which one experiences the differences contributing to their "globality." While expatriate youths and their families thus create their own communities, which often revolve around schools, they practice demarcation towards "locals" in Shanghai as well as those back "home"—with both groups perceived as lacking international experience. Similar to how Brosius, investigating the everyday lives of India's middle class, conceptualizes cosmopolitanism as "a practice of status-creation" (2010, 26), the students and their families use the educational environment and the surrounding network to mediate their "expatriateness."

My three examples show how "expatriateness" is performed, maintained, and taught among expatriate youths who, under the influence of the international schools, and despite differences in their nationality, class, or ethnicity, create a distinct, unifying expatriate group consciousness. Looking at the everyday dimensions of transnational mobility at an international school, I highlight the significant amounts of energy, resources, and organization that go into building and sustaining a community with its distinct practices and norms. It becomes apparent that acquiring the habitus of an expatriate, to claim belonging to an expatriate community, goes hand in hand with processes of demarcation and a certain classism. While the habitus includes valuing cosmopolitanism and diversity, demarcation is an essential part in claiming these values and turning them into useful capital as "globality." As David Ley has argued, "cosmopolitanism itself is always situated, always imbued with partiality and vulnerability" (Ley 2004, 162). The performance of a collective expatriate identity is thus not only tied to aspiring and learning cosmopolitan values, but simultaneously to practices of demarcation towards peers perceived as less mobile, globally connected, and educated. For many students, a school's "nationality" does not necessarily correspond to their own, such that the school itself is seen as providing an added dimension of internationality.

Nevertheless, nationality, in addition to the choice of school, still provides a major marker along which various expatriate communities align themselves. It is therefore not surprising that access to a German school and the German expatriate community proved easier for me than it was

to gain similar access to other (school) communities. While I have set my focus on the schools' impact on the process of creating collective expatriate identities, it can also be said that sometimes, within expatriate communities, in Fechter's words, "national boundaries are still anxiously guarded" (2007b, 110). Despite the efforts made to sustain a sense of community, the student body (as well as the staff and parents) at the different international schools is highly diverse and internal divides still exist. My discussions with teachers and students from the British and American international schools suggest that these internal dividing lines might be even stronger at schools with a larger student body and greater ethnic and national diversity than the German school I studied. Danau Tanu studied these hierarchical divides and the ideal of being "international" at an international school in Jakarta and succinctly summarizes these dynamics:

> Money and cultural hierarchies influence perceptions and interactions that take place on campus. Racial and other identity labels are sometimes used to signify status and cultural difference, but their meanings constantly shift and at times bear no semblance to actual physical appearance. Various forms of social assets, such as language, accents, mannerisms, and money, are used to mark and vie for status. Thus, being "international" is not a straightforward matter. International schools may be a multicultural bubble, but it is a bubble that is not immune to the dynamics at work in the world outside the school gates (2011, 231).

As Tanu's findings show, the student bodies of international schools are highly diverse and crisscrossed by many dividing lines under the guise of a single school community or habitus.

Students' differing stances on the experiences of international education that are presented in the next section allow for a few glimpses into the dividing lines underlying school communities. The section captures expatriate youths' reflections on going to an international school by taking up their main narrative of privilege and pressure.

3.4 Privilege and pressure: youths' experiences at school

PAUL: *They have like a high standard of learning and if you don't have good grades, you get kicked out of school. Or it depends in the schools. There are warning systems and stuff. My school, if you have like a C, all the parents get emails, all the teachers get emails, you are like blacklisted. You have to have As or Bs to like do stuff at my school. If you have a C, forget about it. Parents are called and stuff. It is really a tough type. But, on the other hand, all the teachers are really nice.*

"Tough type" but "really nice," as Paul, a student at an American Christian school in Shanghai puts it, succinctly summarizes the student discourse about these international schools. It is a discourse I encountered in various narratives revolving around the privilege—and pressure—associated with international education.

Fourteen-year-old Keith from Singapore, for example, praises the positive aspects, the privileges of international education.

KEITH: *Well, I think, academic wise, the school is very open, to erm, every student. Especially in the international school, because they are dealing with very different cultures. So, for one the school is very open. So, it teaches different things at different levels, for different students. Like some are better in English, some are so-so. They split them into groups, and just, I think it is very helpful and effective in teaching them. And they also have lots of extra-curriculum activities. Like sports and other forms of activities. And I think that is good, because it helps, teach, and educate in a very different and interesting way.*

Keith, attending an international British school in Shanghai, is clearly proud of his educational institution and, during the group interview, continuously stresses its quality. He describes his school as "open" and attending to the various needs of a diverse student body. Many students described their educational experience in similar ways. German student Peter, reflecting on his education, feels that the privileged environment renders schooling easier.

PETER: *For me, school is easier here. Or rather, you simply study much better here and that's why it's easier. [...] It's all much more efficient here.*[68]

68 German original: PETER: *Für mich ist die Schule hier auch einfacher. Beziehungsweise man lernt einfach viel besser und deswegen ist es einfacher. [...] Viel effizienter ist das hier alles.*

Peter bases his argument for school being "easier" on the privileged circumstances under which lessons take place. During the lessons I attended, I also observed small class sizes, new equipment, and teachers who address students (and their problems) individually, thus supporting those who have difficulties, rather than simply giving them a bad grade. Based on this learning environment, Peter consequently argues that many of his fellow students would not be able to succeed in the same way at other schools that would require much more assertiveness. While some students thus experience private schooling as a mark of privilege—a privilege that echoes the theme of comfort and luxury presented in my first example, "Everyday Comfort"—others feel this privilege is tied to pressure. Mia, for instance, who indirectly compares her school in Shanghai to elite schools in Germany and thus stresses her privileged form of education, also relates her school environment to a communal pressure to perform well.

> MIA: *And [school] is somehow taken much more seriously here than in Germany. I believe here they all want an average of 1.3 or 1.4 [straight-As in the German grading system] and, in Germany, they often don't care. Elite schools also exist in Germany, but in general, if you just ask around, for instance when friends move and then talk about their school, then you always think to yourself: "What? They are happy about a 4 [equivalent to a D or a pass]?!"*[69]

The pressure to perform well can certainly be found among students elsewhere. Many expatriate youths, however, depict this pressure as particularly crucial to their school experience in Shanghai. Norwegian student Britta, from a British school, and Charlie, from the German school and a member of "the girls," explain:

> BRITTA: *And also in IB [International Baccalaureate], I pretty much have to do like homework at least two hours every day. So, I don't really have that much, like, time after school. Just have to eat, and then do my homework. And then I have to go to bed as soon as possible after my homework. I get so tired. That is also something I don't like here.*
>
> CHARLIE: *I somehow feel the pressure at the German school in Shanghai is also much higher. Actually, I can't really say. […] But I find the pressure very strong here.*[70]

---

69 German original: MIA: *Und das wird hier ja auch irgendwie viel ernster genommen als in Deutschland. Ich meine, hier wollen alle einen Schnitt von 1,3 oder 1,4 und in Deutschland ist's denen eigentlich meistens egal. Also es kommt drauf an auf die Schule. Es gibt auch Eliteschulen in Deutschland, aber so generell, wenn man sich jetzt einfach erkundigt, zum Beispiel wenn Freunde wegziehen und dann von ihrer Schule erzählen. Dann denkt man sich immer so: „Was? Die freuen sich über eine Vier!"*

70 German original: CHARLIE: *Ich finde irgendwie auch der Druck an der deutschen Schule Shanghai ist auch irgendwie größer. Eigentlich kann ich es nicht genau sagen. […] Aber ich finde den Druck hier halt sehr stark.*

When talking to me, the students (and those at the German school, in particular) often drew comparisons to schooling elsewhere, stressing the comparatively high expectations of their schools in Shanghai, as Paul's, Mia's, Britta's, and Charlie's remarks demonstrate.

To delineate the various factors leading to such pressure (or at least the perception of it) I want to discuss Charlie's perspective on schooling and pressure in detail and use her voice as one case-in-point. Charlie was sixteen when I first met her. Her parents were born in China and met in Germany during their studies at university. Charlie grew up in Germany and her parents took on German nationality. In the beginning of her high school years, her family decided to move to Shanghai.

One day, when I interview Charlie out in the schoolyard during her free period, she abruptly changes the topic (we are discussing the rising taxi fares in China) and announces:

CHARLIE: *I am scared of the Abitur [A-Levels or final exams for the diploma].*
INTERVIEWER: *What is it that scares you most about it?*
CHARLIE: *That in the end... Well, in the end I would really like to study medicine. And I am afraid that I won't succeed. Directly. I don't want to wait for six semesters or so to get in. Then I would rather study something else. Because medicine already takes so long, then I would already be, no idea, twenty. And when I'm forty I would still be studying or something. Yes. That's why I sometimes put myself a little bit under pressure. And Antonia always puts herself under a lot of pressure, too, because she, too, wants to study medicine. But her grades are really good. She doesn't even need to put herself under pressure. And then, when I'm standing next to her and she starts to put herself under pressure—"I won't make it! I won't make it!"—then I think, "Okay, I can just forget about it."* [71]

Due to her wish to go to medical school in Germany, Charlie demands perfect scores and grades from herself. While she already has doubts about her success, the fact that others at her school also fear failing entrance into med school makes her feel even more pressured.

71 German original: CHARLIE: *Ich hab Angst vorm Abitur.* INTERVIEWER: *Was macht dir da am meisten Angst?* CHARLIE: *Dass ich am Ende... Also, ich möchte am Ende voll gern Medizin studieren. Und ich hab Angst, dass ich es nicht schaffe. Direkt. Ich möchte aber auch nicht so wieder, sechs Wartesemester oder so machen. Dann studiere ich lieber was anderes. Weil Medizin dauert schon so lange, dann bin ich schon so, also keine Ahnung, zwanzig. Und wenn ich vierzig bin, bin ich immer noch am Studieren oder so. Ja. Da mach ich mir manchmal ein bisschen Druck. Und Antonia macht sich halt auch immer sehr viel Druck, weil sie möchte auch Medizin studieren. Aber sie hat so gute Noten. Sie braucht sich gar keinen Druck machen. Und wenn ich dann neben ihr stehe und sie fängt an sich Druck zu machen "Ich schaff das nicht! Ich schaff das nicht!", dann denke ich mir „okay, dann kann ich es ja direkt vergessen."*

When I discussed the high pressure to perform with teachers at the international schools, many pointed at the high involvement of parents in their children's education. During my fieldwork, I also came across the idea of "tiger-mothers" (Chua 2011), those who constantly challenge their children by enrolling them in further educational activities from piano lessons to Chinese tutoring. There is indeed a hyperactivity in many students' lives that seems to go hand-in-hand with expatriate (hyper)mobility; both are seen as beneficial for the development of the child. When I ask Charlie about her parents' views about her med school plans, she explains:

CHARLIE: *They always say it doesn't matter what I study. But [...] I've wanted to study medicine for a long time. And now they've already told their friends. Like really proud, "Yes, my daughter wants to study medicine."*
INTERVIEWER: *And now you almost feel the pressure that you have to do it, something like that?*
CHARLIE: *Yes. I would really like to do it, but I also don't want them to... No idea. I think it's maybe not that important to my parents. But, I don't know. It's somehow important to me that I don't disappoint my parents. No idea. It sounds really stupid.*[72]

The pressure of parental expectations, as Charlie voices them, is something many students share regardless of where they are. I feel, however, that in the case of the expatriate teenagers in Shanghai, their parents, as successful transnational professionals, set the bar particularly high. Still, Charlie, a straight-A student, thinks her parents are not necessarily demanding too much. She explains to me that her parents were rather conservative and her father had voiced his thoughts that, if Charlie were a boy, he would be much stricter and his expectations for her grades would be much higher. "I think he already gave up on it a little bit,"[73] Charlie contemplates during our conversation in the schoolyard. When I voice my surprise about her father's position, she elaborates:

CHARLIE: *Yes, they just meant, probably, that boys have to work and so on and earn big money. And my parents just think that, if I study medicine, I should open a practice. Have a child. Just laid-back. [...]*
INTERVIEWER: *<L> That's not that laid-back! <L> Med school, just opening a practice!*

---

72 German original: CHARLIE: *Aber sie meinen ja auch immer, es wär ja egal was ich studiere. Aber [...] ich will schon sehr lange Medizin studieren. Und jetzt haben sie es auch schon ihren Freunden erzählt. So ganz stolz: „Ja, meine Tochter will Medizin studieren."* INTERVIEWER: *Jetzt fühlst du dich fast schon unter Druck gesetzt, dass du das machen musst, so ungefähr?* CHARLIE: *Ja. Ich würd es wirklich gern machen, Aber ich will jetzt auch nicht, dass die das ... Keine Ahnung. Ich glaube meinen Eltern ist es vielleicht nicht so wichtig. Aber, ich weiß nicht. Mir ist es irgendwie wichtig, dass ich meine Eltern nicht enttäusche. Keine Ahnung, das hört sich voll doof an.*

73 German original: *Ich glaube er hat es schon ein bisschen aufgegeben.*

CHARLIE: *No. But my parents think, well, university is really laid-back and so on. But I think that's also because they were in China before that. And studying in Germany is likely to be more relaxed than school in China. [...] But my parents are actually pretty lenient. Well, for being Chinese parents. <L> Because they also let me go party in the evenings. Well, they don't like it if I go out too often. But once in a while is okay. And they support it when I do something with friends and so on. Just now they think studying for the Abitur is the most important issue. But there are also parents who don't allow that at all.*[74]

Like Charlie, expat youths generally consider Chinese schooling to be hard and academic success more important for Chinese parents.[75] Consequently, at the schools, I regularly came across the prevailing conception among expat teenagers that those who have Chinese parents were automatically under more pressure than their peers from other backgrounds. Although friendships between students with Asian or non-Asian backgrounds were normal, I felt that having a Chinese parent was sometimes a dividing line that subtly underlay the shared experience of school. Through the eyes of the teenagers at the German school, for instance, high expectations from parents with Chinese roots are normal and also thought to indirectly influence the overall pressure to perform for all students in class. In school, a student's "Chineseness" is thus often equated with diligent studying, learning to play an instrument, and abstinence from nightlife activities, due to the parents' assumed objections. Students often play with these stereotypes and use these as a basis for jokes. They see their own international education as influenced by "Chinese" pressure and high expectations. Some students, mostly those who are relatively new to the expatriate community in Shanghai, voice their annoyance—sometimes by again "othering" students with Chinese backgrounds—about the pressure to perform.

---

74 German original: CHARLIE: *Ja, die meinten halt, wahrscheinlich so Jungen müssen arbeiten und so und das große Geld verdienen. Und meine Eltern meinen halt, dass, wenn ich Medizin studiere, [soll ich] eine Praxis aufmachen. Mit Kind. Halt so gechillt.* INTERVIEWER: *<L> So gechillt ist das auch nicht. <L> Mal ein Medizinstudium, eben mal eine Praxis aufmachen!* CHARLIE: *Nee. Aber meine Eltern meinten halten, so ja, Studium wäre voll entspannt und so. Aber ich glaub das ist auch, weil sie vorher in China waren. Und in Deutschland Studium ist bestimmt entspannter als in China Schule. [...] Aber meine Eltern sind eigentlich ganz locker. Also dafür, dass sie chinesische Eltern sind. <L> Weil sie lassen mich auch feiern gehen abends. Also sie mögen es nicht so gerne, wenn ich so oft gehe. Aber ab und zu ist okay. Und sonst unterstützen die das auch wenn ich was mit Freunden mache und so was. Nur jetzt meinen sie halt Abiturlernen ist das Wichtigste. Aber es gibt halt auch so Eltern, die das gar nicht erlauben.*

75 For urban Chinese youths' perspectives on the role of academic success in developing personal "quality" (suzhi), see Vanessa L. Fong (Fong 2007). Drawing from interviews and thirty-two months of participant observation conducted in schools in Dalian between 1997 and 2006, Fong examines how urban Chinese "only-children" negotiate the popular idea of "quality" by stressing the importance of aspects of quality—such as morality, cosmopolitanism, or academic achievement—that favored their own strengths.

LARA: *And we don't have to say that it's bad to be good at school, or to think about the future. We do that, too. But we don't say it. The strong interest [in school] here [leads to] other things being pushed to the back that are actually pretty important for enjoying life. I mean, I don't live only to have achieved something in sixty years. No friends, no contacts and then I die. That's not the meaning of life; I don't think so.*[76]

Lara criticizes the importance her classmates place on having good grades. This emphasis is likely connected to the pressure to work hard for future success. This focus on the future is discussed in more detail in Part IV, Chapter 1.

Privilege and pressure thus seem to have a dialectic relationship in the students' narratives and lives. The awareness of enjoying a privileged education and lifestyle, for some students, also carries with it the pressure to perform well. In all expatriate families, careers—and the education perceived as necessary to excel at them—are almost always viewed as highly important; they are considered worth the move to Shanghai to begin with. Unemployed parents are altogether unknown in the expatriate community. While the community is heterogeneous and class divides within Shanghai's expatria of course exist, the international students also have no classmates whose parents have a working-class background. However, as I observed during my fieldwork at the German school, students are quite aware of the differences in degree of pressure exerted on students with Chinese versus Western backgrounds.

3.5 Concluding thoughts on "expatriateness" and the role of schools

This chapter examined expatriate youths' shared experiences of belonging to an international school community—an experience that the student Allen, in the beginning of this chapter, described as everyone being in "the same space." I described how this space is shaped by Shanghai's specific international school landscape, which does not allow Chinese passport holders to enroll at any of these schools unless special circumstances exist. These schools are therefore almost hermetically sealed spaces. At the same time, as the second subsection illustrated, the schools put much effort into creating a shared experience for students. This building of a school community is based on establishing certain "social aesthetics"

---

76 German original: LARA: *Und wir müssen jetzt nicht sagen, dass das schlecht ist, wenn man jetzt gut in der Schule ist, oder über Zukunft nachdenkt. Das machen wir ja auch. Aber wir sagen das halt nicht. Dieses starke Interesse hier [an Schule führt dazu], dass schon andere Sachen einfach in den Hintergrund geschoben werden; was eigentlich auch relativ wichtig ist um Spaß zu haben am Leben. Ich meine, ich lebe nicht nur damit ich in sechzig Jahren irgendwas erreicht habe. Keine Freunde, keine Kontakte und sterb dann. Das ist nicht der Sinn des Lebens, glaub ich nicht.*

(MacDougall 2006) that involve a specific material culture and concrete everyday routines for students. The resulting school communities are all unified in the collective experience of belonging to an expatriate network in Shanghai. The schools here play a vital role in mediating what it means to be or act like an expatriate. In this way, the schools not only affect students' lives, but also those of their families. They are community hubs for Shanghai's expatria and offer parents an entrance to an expatriate community. I therefore argue that it is precisely in the spaces of the international schools that collective expatriate identities are negotiated and mediated on an everyday basis—through community events, communal valuing of the school as a site for the youths' (cosmopolitan) formation, and through the admission process that requires the "right" financial means or jobs, the "right" passports, and the "right" grades. The schools are seen as bringing together students from various international backgrounds, but—as with the gated communities—the diversity there is controlled. However, while the negotiations of collective expatriate identities forge a common consensus on what it means to be an expatriate in Shanghai, they do not always bridge internal divides, particularly along the lines of nationality or ethnicity, as the student discourse on the privilege and pressure of international education and the role of Chinese parents reveals.

The controlled spaces of the schools are largely shaped by their institutional frameworks, but there are also places that teenagers seek out and shape on their own. These places are crucial for enabling teenagers to gain meaning and agency in their migration experience. As Massey (1995, 207) succinctly notes, "making of place is part of constructing the identity and coherence of the social group itself." It is these reciprocal processes of space and age group identity performances that the next part, "Arriving," foregrounds, with the aim of further understanding how expatriate youth culture is caught in the dynamics of "uprootings and regroundings" (Ahmed et al. 2003), "flows," and boundaries.



Figure 20. The Shop: Students Walking through the Small Alley, June 2011. Photo by M. Sander.

PART IV
Living

MIA: *It's really like that, if you're homesick, because you're somewhere in a foreign country or in a foreign city, you just have to do something.*[1]

This part of the book examines expatriate teenagers' narratives and practices of emplacement in Shanghai. While it continues to address the students as part of the expatriate community with its processes of demarcation and detachment from local Chinese communities, it zooms in on their particular age-specific spatial and social practices. I chose to foreground the youths' efforts toward creating their own spaces, as I understand these to be crucial for teenagers to gain meaning and agency in their migration experience. I draw on Howes' (2007) concept of emplacement to further understand how the expatriate youth cultures in Shanghai unfold in specific, everyday places and emerge in-between the dynamics of "uprootings and regroundings" (Ahmed et al. 2003). Howes stresses the importance of sensory experiences in everyday life and regards these as "a field of cultural elaboration" and "an arena for structuring social roles and interactions" (Howes 2007, xi). For my purposes, I interpret Howes' concept of emplacement as a means of grasping the physical experience of places, of being in and engaging with the "here and now." I include in this interpretation the idea that how one experiences places simultaneously shapes one's environment. This approach is in line with Howe's argument that the process of emplacement is the counterpart to displacement, "the feeling that one is homeless, disconnected from one's physical and social environment" (Howes [2005] 2006, 7).

In the chapters that follow, I first discuss students' conceptions of age identities (in Chapter 1) and then move on to their related spatial practices. The next two chapters in this part provide two specific examples of youths' agency in creating their own spaces: going out (Chapter 2, on nightlife spaces) and hanging out at "the shop" (Chapter 3), a space on a small street close to school. These two spaces are in stark contrast to the gated communities and the schools presented in Part III, which contribute to the youths' everyday experience of Shanghai being divided into "the city" and "expat spaces" (see Part III, Chapter 1). The schools and gated communi-

1 German original: MIA: *Es ist wirklich so, wenn du Heimweh hast, weil du irgendwo in einem fremden Land bist oder in einer fremden Stadt, muss man einfach was machen.*

ties are characterized by what sociologist Zeiher (2003) has called “insularisation,” a term which refers to the increasing number of places particularly designed for children who move almost entirely between those places. While the expatriate teenagers also feel they are mostly being shuttled between gated communities and international school compounds, they choose and claim the two spaces presented here as their own. The analysis of these two spaces and the related construction of age identities also address the students’ overall perceptions and representations of the city of Shanghai. Chapter 4 closes this part of the book with an examination of the teenagers’ relations to Shanghai and its local citizens.

CHAPTER 1
"My Time is Now:" The Role of Age

> *The focus on children's futures and adults' investment in this can also blind us to their agency as social actors in their own right (James and James 2008, 65).*

Migration experiences are evidently age-specific, as the ethnographic vignettes on the decision-making process about moving in Part II, Chapter 1 show. Older siblings, for example, choose to stay, or at least consider staying, whereas younger ones often have no choice. This part therefore discusses the role of age in the migration process by investigating the reflections and the teenagers' age-related identity performances and ties them to current academic debates on youth that were addressed earlier, in the Introduction.

1.1 Wrong time to move, right time to be there

I am sitting outside, in a rather undisturbed corner of the schoolyard, on a few steps behind the track, listening to Karina and Lara's accounts of their move to Shanghai about seven months prior. Although it is only the end of February, the sunshine is bright and warm. While the three of us enjoy these first moments of spring, the two girls, like many of my interviewees, explain why they feel it was simply the wrong time for them to move abroad.

> KARINA: *The younger you are the less painful it is, I think. I don't know. When I was eight years old we moved to [a town in Northern China]. When my mother told me about it I was really happy. Right? Every day I asked: "Has dad signed the contract yet? Can we finally go to China?" and so on. Because, I was younger, and I wanted to experience something. But the older you get, the stronger your relations to others become. Somehow. I don't know, you get used to them. When you then get separated from them, I wasn't happy any more. Yippee off to China. Instead, I just screamed at my father. Because it just sucked.*[2]

2 German original: KARINA: *Je jünger man ist, desto schmerzloser, ist es, denk ich so. Ich weiß nicht. Als ich acht Jahre war sind wir nach [Stadt in Nordchina] gezogen. Als das mir meine Mutter erzählt hat, war ich voll glücklich. Ja? Und ich hab jeden Tag nachgefragt: Hat mein Vater den Vertrag schon unterschrieben? Können wir endlich nach China und so. Weil irgendwie, ich war noch kleiner und ich wollte was erleben. Aber jetzt, je älter man wird, desto fester wird auch die Beziehung zu den Leuten. Irgendwie. Ich weiß nicht, man gewöhnt sich an die. Wenn man dann einfach getrennt wird von denen. Dann war ich doch nicht mehr so glücklich. Juhu,*

Both Karina and Lara, seventeen and sixteen years old, believe that age plays a role in the difficulties of moving, arguing that adolescence seems a particularly bad time. Lara explains:

> LARA: *It is more difficult. I just experienced that. At my age it just sucks. You have your friends, your boyfriend, whatever.*[3]

Transnational mobility challenges not only relations to places, but also relationships. As both quotes from the discussion with Karina and Lara show, the two students argue that because relationships to peers grow stronger over the years as one becomes more independent from parents, the move abroad becomes more difficult. Both also point out that school makes it more difficult to move in their mid- or late-teens. They emphasise that moving in the final years before graduation gives them less time to adjust to the new environment, since grades often already count for the final diploma—a major issue that Britta from Norway also repeatedly stressed during my interview with her at the British school.

While most teenagers think of adolescence as the wrong time to move, however, they may also see it as the right time to be in Shanghai. The mega-city offers numerous bars and clubs that commonly do not enforce any age-based entry restrictions. The youths often take this opportunity to explore nightlife to a degree that is usually impossible for their peers in Europe or Northern America. Britta explains:

> BRITTA: *There is so much nightlife, there is so much fun. 'Cause in Norway you have to be eighteen or twenty-one to get into the club.*

The absence of enforced age restrictions in China's nightlife spaces makes the stay attractive for teenagers, who are in the process of exploring their age identities. Chapter 2 therefore provides detailed descriptions of these nightlife practices.

But regardless of their exciting nightlife options, like Karina, most of my informants perceive and convey adolescence as a difficult time to move. Moreover, they differentiate being a teenager from being a child and argue that the losses experienced by younger children are less severe and that their integration at a new school is easier. The students I interviewed seem to be familiar with—and even reiterate—the notion that children are simply part of a family, without any social ties of their own. This goes hand in hand with concepts that see children as not yet fully-developed human beings. Such approaches have lately been criticized and re-conceptualized in anthropology and related disciplines (Bucholtz 2002; Hutchins 2011, see

nach China. Sondern ich hab meinen Vater einfach angeschrien. Weil ich das scheiße fand.

3 German original: LARA: *Ist halt schwerer so. Ich hab's ja jetzt gemerkt. Mit meinem Alter ist einfach doof. Hat seine Freunde, Freund, wie auch immer.*

also the Introduction). Hutchins (2011), for instance, studying the experiences of children moving to Australia, stresses how their personal social ties impact the move. I believe that the older teenagers emphasize their distinction from the younger children, as for instance Lara and Karina do when talking about the difficulties of moving, in order to stress the importance of their own social lives and ties and to counteract being perceived as having none.

The two seemingly contradicting discourses presented here—that of adolescence being the wrong time for moving, but the right time for living in Shanghai—actually support each other. Both narratives serve to perform and manifest the specific age identities of someone who is gradually outgrowing the realm of the family.

1.2 Future benefits and the art project "My time is now"

As shown in earlier parts of the book, experiences abroad are often considered to be beneficial capital for the future: the hardship of moving at an early age will pay off when the children grow up and enter professional life. This focus on development for future benefit is common when discussing young people's lives and underlies the idea of adolescence. Mary Bucholtz (2002) has argued that anthropological and sociological works on adolescence often see this development as a staging ground for integration into the adult community. Conceptualizations of this kind frame young people's own cultural practices solely in relation to adult concerns. Bucholtz has consequently called for a shift, not only terminologically but also theoretically, from the anthropology of adolescence to the anthropology of youth. She aims at research practices that focus on youth's own perspectives and that distance themselves from the conceptualization of adolescence as merely a phase dedicated to leading towards adulthood: "Where the study of adolescence generally concentrates on how bodies and minds are shaped for adult futures, the study of youth emphasizes instead the here-and-now of young people's experience, the social and cultural practices through which they shape their worlds" (Bucholtz 2002, 532).

Bucholtz's argument is echoed by Allison and Adrian James, who find that society's (and often research's) focus on children's futures "detract[s] from the recognition of the importance of children's experiences of the present and the significance of these experiences in shaping the adults they will become" (2008, 64–65). The source of this focus on children's and adolescents' futures James and James see in society's interest in securing people's contributions in the years to come:

> Thus the provisions that all societies make in some shape or form to ensure the health, education and well-being of their children in the present—their welfare—are also an investment in their future, as individual adults, and in the future of the society of which they will

form a part and to which they are expected to make a contribution at some point in the future (ibid., 64).

Alex, for instance, in a group discussion with Bjorn and Don, explains his view of grown-up life:

ALEX: *I am not in this world to work. I want to have fun.*
DON AND BJORN: *<L> Yeah.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
ALEX: *I want to enjoy that and so on. And of course find a job that I enjoy. In any case. My father, now, well, I observe that: He leaves at around the same time when I leave for school. At about seven. And he some-times comes home at ten. And then I think, that can't be it! Then he goes to his study and still does something. Locks himself in. And then on the week-end, he takes my mother to brunch somewhere or something. Phh. I don't know. He looks happy, but I couldn't do it. No way.*[4]

Alex criticizes the pressure to conform and work in adult life, as he observes in his father's daily routine. At the same time, he rejects the "investment in [his] future" (James and James 2008, 64) that he is supposed to prioritize in his life now. It is a rejection of the pressure he experiences in a future-driven environment and his own future-driven social status as a teenager.

While I, in the future-oriented status of a PhD candidate (routinely facing questions such as "What do you want to do afterwards?"), might have been particularly sensitive to the pressures of planning and working hard for the future, the expatriate youths seldom verbalized this pressure directly. Reading between the lines, however, their worries over what to study or which career to pursue hinted at the future-orientedness that underlies expatriate youth's experiences in Shanghai. While pondering the loaded question of what lies ahead (for my subjects and myself), I came across an art project by the German student Andrea entitled "My time is now." (Figure 21a).

The art project consists of several photographs showing children and teenagers holding up or standing in front of a sign that displays line after

---

4 German original: ALEX: *Ich bin halt irgendwie nicht auf der Welt um zu arbeiten. Ich will Spaß haben.* DON UND BJORN: *<L> Joa.* INTERVIEWER: *<L>* ALEX: *Ich will das genießen und und. Und natürlich will ich einen Job finden, der mir dann Spaß macht. Dann auf jeden Fall. Mein Vater jetzt selber, also ich seh das ja. […] Der fährt auch um so die Uhrzeit los wenn ich in die Schule fahre. So um sieben Uhr. Und der kommt dann teilweise um zehn Uhr nach Hause. Und dann denk ich auch so, das kann doch nicht sein. Der geht dann noch in sein Büro und macht noch irgendwas. Schließt sich da ein. Und am Wochenende geht er dann mit meiner Mutter irgendwo brunchen oder so. Phh. Ich weiß nicht. Er sieht glücklich aus, aber ich könnte das nicht. Auf keinen Fall.*

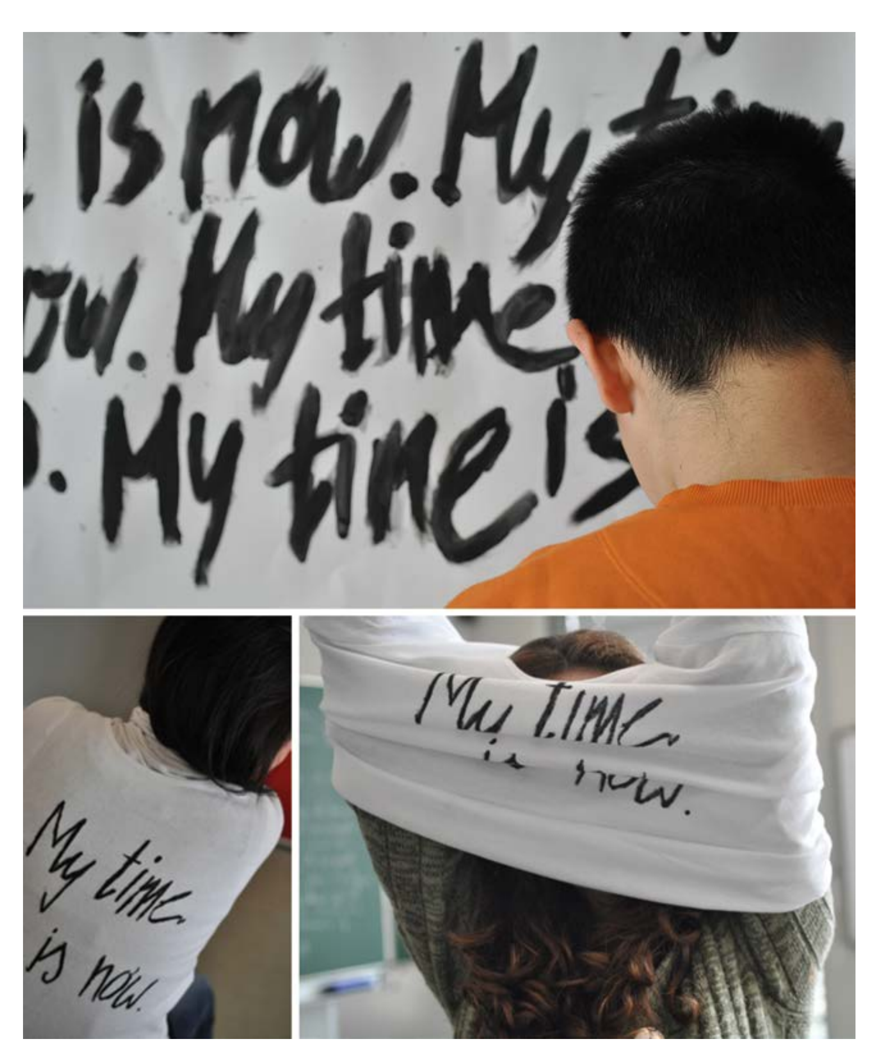


Figure 21. Sign and T-Shirt from Student Art Project "My Time is Now." Photos by Andrea.

line the text "My time is now," as well as students wearing a white t-shirt with the same text. In many cases, a group of students or individuals look into the camera, laughing or enjoying themselves. To secure the anonymity of students, however, I only include images from Andrea's project that do not reveal faces (Figure 21b and c).[5]

In the context of preparing for future moves, education, and jobs, the message: "My time is now" seems like a stop sign, an appeal to look at the here-and-now (Bucholtz 2002, 532), the time in Shanghai. However, it was not until my last fieldwork stay in June 2012, after having contemplated

5 For that reason, the images displaying smiling students capture a more positive atmosphere than those included in this chapter.

these images for several months back in Germany, that I arranged an interview with Andrea to discuss her art project. During our interview, we sit in a sidewalk cafe, the voice-recorder between us. I ask her to explain the project and its context of production.

> ANDREA: *It's a tradition at our school to do such a project every year. And last year [the theme] was "time." [...] And then art classes are requested to create a project according to the theme. An artwork, a painting, it had to have something to do with photography.*[6]

While the school had given the topic of "time" and her art teacher had prescribed the method of photography to artistically engage with the theme, linking "time" to the experience of school was Andrea's idea.

> ANDREA: *And [...] I had let myself get inspired by American schools. They always like to draw attention to their community and so on, their school life—practically like a publicity campaign. That's extremely embarrassing, sometimes. Then I thought this would be appreciated at our school. And it was, by teachers and so on. So I proceeded like this: okay, now I do a project, [and] because I am not a good photographer, [it] doesn't need to be photographically convincing. But it can allude a little bit to us being one school, "sheltered and grown together" [referring to the school slogan] and so on. Because it's not really German to represent yourself like that, I thought my teachers might pick up on that. And erm <L>, everything was really pretty cheesy. And then I used Google to see what kind of quotes exist, because I wanted to do something with text and photography. Well and then "My time is now" appeared, which is really perfect. And a bit too kitschy. And then I made this t-shirt. I thought, "Okay, then they can wear that or hold it." [...] And this sign. And then I walked around school and asked a few students to help me. And then I asked my friends if they would help me, because I don't like being like: "Hello, my name is Andrea! We are <x>." Of course I put some effort into involving some French students, because it refers even more to this social inclusion that is so popular at every school in Germany.*[7]

---

6 German original: ANDREA: *Das ist ja an unserer Schule so eine Tradition, dass man jedes Jahr so ein Projekt macht. Und letztes Jahr war [das Thema] „Zeit." [...] Und dann wird man halt [...] im Kunstunterricht dazu aufgefordert ein Projekt dazu zu gestalten. Ein Kunstwerk, also ein Bild, also mit Fotografie sollte es etwas zu tun haben.*

7 German original: ANDREA: *Und [...] ich hab mich da so ein bisschen von amerikanischen Schulen inspirieren lassen. Die ja immer sehr auf ihre Gemeinschaft und so, und auf ihr Schulleben anspielen, gerne auch – wie so Werbeaktionen praktisch. Das ist ja voll peinlich zum Teil. Ich hab mir dann gedacht, das käme an unserer Schule sehr gut [...] an. Also es war ja dann [so], also bei den Lehrern und so. Also ich bin*

While I had interpreted the art project as a statement against the pressure to focus on the future and as an appeal to look at the moment in Shanghai, my interview with Andrea pointed in a different direction. Her approach to the project had been more that of a designer working at a marketing agency, with customers—the teachers and the school—clearly in mind when choosing the theme and producing the images. However, the success of her images within the school also shows in what fertile ground Andrea had planted her idea: her claim, “My time is now,” was used for the whole school’s art project that would later win a state-sponsored award for the school’s arts program (see Part III, Chapter 3, where I comment on the movie that her schoolmate Kressi shot for the awards ceremony). Andrea’s photography project rendered the future-orientedness in the students’ lives visible to educators and the school community.

1.3 Rejecting “old people”—claiming spaces

While the expatriate students like to emphasize their own social ties—for instance when talking about the experience of moving to Shanghai, as Karina’s and Lara’s narratives in the beginning of this chapter demonstrate—one should not be tempted to read their acknowledgement of these ties as evidence of their wanting to be “adults.” Their practices of distinguishing themselves from younger children are not aimed at their being seen as “adults,” but rather as “youths.” This becomes clear in their disapproval of “old people” and their practices, an attitude which I came across several times during fieldwork encounters and interviews, as the following excerpt of a discussion with Antonia and Olivia on nightlife spaces illustrates.

ANTONIA: *Occasionally we go to Zapatas after Mural. Even though there are a lot of old people. But sometimes it’s fun to dance on the bar.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L> As old as I am?*
ANTONIA: *No. They are even older!*

---

dann so vorgegangen, okay, jetzt mach ich mal ‘nen Projekt, muss ja jetzt nicht, weil ich kann nicht so gut fotografieren […], muss ja jetzt nicht fotografisch überzeugen. Aber es kann ja mal so ein bisschen anspielen, dass wir eine Schule sind, „geborgen und gemeinsam gewachsen“ [Anspielung an Schulslogan] und so was. Weil das ja nicht so deutsch ist so was, sich da so selbst zu präsentieren […] dachte ich mir auch, dass das entsprechend von meinen Lehrern aufgegriffen werden könnte. Und ehm <L>, war ja schon sehr cheesy alles. Und hab dann im Internet gegoogelt, was es denn so für Zitate gibt, denn ich wollte gern so was mit Text und Fotografie machen. Und ja dann kam da „My time is now,“ was ja voll perfekt ist. Und so ein bisschen sehr kitschig. Und hab dann halt dieses T-Shirt [gemacht], ich dachte mir: „Ja, okay, dann können die das tragen oder halten.“ […]. Und dieses Schild. Und dann bin ich in der Schule rum und hab ein paar Schüler gefragt ob die mir da helfen. Dann hab ich meine Freundinnen gefragt ob die mir da helfen, weil ich bin da nicht gerne so: „Hallo, meine Name ist Andrea! Wir machen <x>.“ Hab dann natürlich, ehm, mir Mühe gegeben ein paar Franzosen reinzubekommen, weil das spielt ja noch mehr diese soziale Integration an. Die bei uns ja in Deutschland an jeder Schule total beliebt ist.

INTERVIEWER: *Sometimes I find it strange; sometimes I find it cool that it is really mixed here, in terms of age. It's not like that in Germany, I think.*
OLIVIA: *But sometimes it is pretty annoying, too.*
ANTONIA: *Come on, people between twenty and thirty are okay. But if there are fifty-year-old men at the bar, then you think: "aaah."*
OLIVIA: *I mean it's okay for them to be there. I mean it's their lives. If they want to do that, then they should do that. But then they should at least leave the young people in peace. <L> I mean it's just like that. A fifty-year-old can't hit on a, I don't know, twenty-year-old.*[8]

The two girls' annoyance, which in this case centers on "old men at the bar," stems from their perception that "old people" occupy or interfere with spaces that they have claimed as their own. I argue that they make this claim to distinguish themselves from adults and simultaneously find ways to counteract the lingering pressure to focus on their future. In short, the students identify nightclubs as a space of youth. The following chapter further investigates the role of nightlife in youths' constructions of age-identities as well as in their emplacement in Shanghai.

8 German original: ANTONIA: *Manchmal gehen wir nach dem Mural auch ins Zapatas. Auch wenn da sehr viel alte Menschen sind. Aber manchmal ist es lustig auf der Bar zu tanzen.* INTERVIEWER: *<L> So alt wie ich?* ANTONIA: *Nein. Die sind noch viel älter!* INTERVIEWER: *Manchmal finde ich es komisch, manchmal finde ich es cool, dass es halt so super gemischt ist, altersmäßig. Das ist ja in Deutschland nicht so, finde ich.* OLIVIA: *Aber das ist manchmal ziemlich nervig. Auch.* ANTONIA: *Na komm, Leute zwischen zwanzig und dreißig sind ja okay. Aber wenn so fünfzigjährige alte Männer in der Bar sitzen, dann denkst du auch schon: „aaah." Und dann machen die einen auch noch an. Und dann, aaah.* OLIVIA: *Ich meine, die können da ja gerne sein. Ich mein, das ist ja ihr Leben. Und wenn sie das machen wollen, dann sollen sie das auch. Aber dann sollen sie wenigstens die jungen Leute in Ruhe lassen. <L> Ich mein, das ist ja wohl so. Einer über fünfzig kann sich ja nicht ranmachen, an eine, was weiß ich, Zwanzigjährige.*

CHAPTER 2
Nightlife: Going Out

This chapter shows how Shanghai's nightscapes are a crucial platform for the identity negotiations of expatriate youths. While not all students participate in nightlife activities,[9] clubbing practices are nevertheless pivotal because they are central to teenagers' involvement with the city; they are also an important form of coming to terms with the move to Shanghai. Here, teenagers claim new spaces collectively, and without the inclusion of their families. In exploring these practices, this chapter first analyzes Shanghai's nightlife spaces in general to examine the conditions it presents to the teenage patrons. Considering that, in Shanghai, there are—de facto—no age-based restrictions to clubs or bars, I first examine the resulting heated debates on teenage nightlife practices in the expatriate community, as well as students' accounts of negotiating parental concern in the second section. The next section gives a detailed description of teenagers' habits when they go out, based on participant observations as well as interviews. Based on the Friday night routine at a club called Mural, it analyzes how going out is a break from the school routine, a means to play with and affirm their age, gender, cosmopolitan, and urban identities, and a way to stregthen friendships. The fourth and final section concludes the analysis of the role of nightlife spaces in teenage expatriates' experiences of their stay in Shanghai.

2.1 Shanghai's nightlife spaces

When entering bars or clubs in Shanghai, I often feel like many of them could be in any large city or tourist location. The menu displays the same cocktails, wines, and liquors that are offered elsewhere. Occasionally, local beers, mostly *Qingdao,* are presented along with international beer brands. The music played, although varying between locations in Shanghai, is typical of mainstream party locations in Europe. People's attire depends on the

9 The students interviewed at the Singaporean school and a few students from the German school, for instance, do not take part in the described nightlife activities. For the youths at the Singaporean school, instead, a certain shopping mall served as their center for after school activities. Here they shop, dine, go to the cinema, sing karaoke, or play pool. Furthermore, watching DVDs and hanging out with family and friends are common activities for all teenagers. For insights into differing practices of adult expatriates from Singapore and Britain in China, see Brenda Yeoh and Katie Willis, 2002 and 2005.

locations' dress codes, which are implicitly or openly stated: the men often wear dress shirts and the women display more skin and make-up than during the day. Everyone seems to be engaged in practices familiar from nightlife locations in Europe: chatting, drinking, and sometimes dancing. One finds the same tastes, same sounds, same visuals, and same practices. Thus, Shanghai offers a very international dance club scene.[10] My own immediate familiarity with all these sensory impressions and patterns confirms James Farrer's (2011) conceptualization of Shanghai's bars and clubs as belonging to a "global nightscape." The idea is based on Appadurai's (1990, 296) understanding of the global cultural economy and its "dimensions of global cultural flow." In Farrer's (2011, 748) words, the concept refers primarily to "the ways in which these local urban nightscapes are sites of transnational flows." Additionally, these global nightscapes—to use Farrer's description which is based on Chatterton and Hollands's (2003) findings—are "constructed through globalising cultural and corporate processes that homogenise and stratify nightlife experiences" (Farrer 2011, 748). Farrer succinctly points out the consequences of emerging global nightscapes for foreign visitors: "Pragmatically, nightlife globalisation means that anyone familiar with nightlife in other global cities could pick his or her way through Shanghai's global nightscapes with relative ease upon landing in the city, using the categories of spaces learned already in similar settings" (Farrer 2011, 748).

There are locations in Shanghai, such as Karaoke bars, clubs with big seating areas and small dance floors, beverages which must be ordered by the bottle, and those where people play Chinese drinking games based on dice rolling, which offer unfamiliar experiences to the foreign visitor. The expatriate youths, however, mostly choose clubs that are very international in terms of sounds, drinks, and practices. If they go to clubs that they label as "more Chinese," they still pursue their familiar ways of partying. In general, Shanghai offers many locations that follow such a pattern of nightlife aimed toward a global audience; these locations are easy for me and the students alike to navigate.

Nightlife in Shanghai, however, is only easy to navigate to those who can afford it: the drinks cost as much as a meal for two in a local restaurant, the cover charges are high, and taxi rides are necessary because the subway and most buses stop running at eleven p.m. Consequently, the majority of clubs are only affordable to the upper-middle classes of Shang-

10 For a detailed description of the development of the internationalized dance club scene in Shanghai see Andrew Field (2008). Field provides four in-depth examples of clubs in Shanghai and succinctly illustrates the development, success, and failure of clubs in the context of the city's economic development and rapidly changing consumer culture between 1997 and 2007. For a brief overview of the earlier developments of dance halls from the 1920s onwards, as well as the rise of discos in the 1990s in Shanghai, see James Farrer's *Opening Up* (2002), primarily chapter nine. Here, Farrer pays particular attention to the links between dance and sexual culture.

hai.[11] Despite—or maybe even because of—this stratification, I argue that, given the spaces' orientation toward profit, all the clubs and bars we visited fit into Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands's (2003) definition of "mainstream." In their book *Urban Nightscapes,* Chatterton and Hollands argue that city nightlife today is characterized by "mainstream production, through the corporatisation of ownership via processes of branding and theming" as well as "regulation, through practices which increasingly aid capital accumulation and urban image-building." These practices simultaneously heighten surveillance and "consumption, through new forms of segmented nightlife activity driven by processes of gentrification and the adoption of 'upmarket' lifestyle identities among groups of young adults" (Chatterton and Hollands 2003, 7). Chatterton and Hollands's analysis is concerned with nightlife spaces in Great Britain; however, the processes of theming, urban-image building, surveillance, and gentrification are also prominent in Shanghai, and not only in its nightlife spaces. In preparation for the World Expo in 2010, the city underwent a degree of polishing, which also stimulated gentrification projects in areas such as the former French concession.

As competitive and future-oriented as Shanghai presented itself to be in hosting the expo, it simultaneously shines brightly with nostalgia, particularly at night. High-end restaurants, bars, and clubs in Shanghai are often located either in old buildings of the former French concession, or in those along Shanghai's waterfront, the Bund. Thus, the physical locations of nightlife spaces build upon the city's colonial past. Some places are even restored to their former glory, i.e. the premises of the former Shanghai Club located at the Bund, the principal men's club for British residents of colonial Shanghai during its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s, famous for its thirty-four meter long bar. The Waldorf Astoria that now runs the building rebuilt the "long bar" after photographs from 1911 and re-opened it in October 2010 (McDermott 2010). Many of these places are highly frequented by expatriates and thus show the relevance of Fechter and Walsh's (2010) call for a closer look at dis/continuities with a colonial past in expatriate spaces. Media scholar Amanda Lagerkvist's article (2007) "Gazing at Pudong—'With a Drink in Your Hand'" explores the particular relationship between Westerners and today's Shanghai, discussing "how Shanghai is currently being scripted for/by Western travelers as a multisensuous geography in a way that acts out overlapping temporalities" (Lagerkvist 2007, 186). Lagerkvist looks at travel writings and investigates Westerners' practices of consumption in Shanghai, in particular in the famous Bund area, which is lined with buildings from the city's colonial past.

11 For the links between class and nightlife spaces in Shanghai, see again Field (2008). His article pays particular attention to the promotion of class identities through dance club visits.

> Zooming in on the restaurant, the cafe, and the villa garden as chronotopes of nostalgic dwelling brings into view scripted spaces of Western cultural superiority. In spite of the "semiotic skills" and "openness toward others" among the cosmopolitans, in these spaces they act out remembrances of the affluent and "golden" past. Consuming the city by consuming, for example, food, drink, views and music endorses power and control (Lagerkvist 2007, 163).

Lagerkvist describes these immersions as "imaginary journeys into the past, as well as into the future," and calls this multisensory practice "time travel" (ibid., 161). The incorporation of the past in present urban planning serves Shanghai's anticipated reemergence as the most important international city in China. Based on Möckel-Rieke (1998), Lagerkvist acknowledges how "cultural memory can only be established by media" (2007, 168), but points out how this remembering needs the active involvement of foreign travelers (ibid., 167).

> But reminiscing only comes into being through the appropriation of the memory dispositif, and conversely, the "cosmopolitan visitors" come into being through these mediatized performances. In other words, they are constituted by their mnemonic acts and technologies. Hence, in the massive transition of Shanghai, foreigners have roles to play that are very important [and], at the same time, highly morally questionable (Lagerkvist 2007, 168).

Lagerkvist's argument about the roles foreign tourists (or residents) play in reminiscing about Shanghai's past is interesting in the context of Fechter and Walsh's call for investigating colonial dis/continuities in expatriate lifeworlds (2010). Although, as this chapter shows, the high school students do not openly engage in establishing connections to Shanghai's semi-colonial past, certain nightlife locations on the Bund or in the former French concession inevitably open a connection to the city's history. Nightlife spaces in Shanghai are thus not only part of Farrer's "global nightscapes" (2011) and "mainstream" in Chatterton and Hollands's (2003) understanding, but, on a second, less obvious level, also very "Shanghainese," carrying connotations of—and sometimes continuity with—the city's semi-colonial past.

2.2 Open doors and open bars: negotiating access and parental concern

While nightlife spaces are often associated with freedom and experimentation, access to commercial mainstream club spaces can also be regulated, stratified, and restricted (Hollands 2002; Chatterton and Hollands 2003). Knowledge about dress codes, financial means, and sometimes memberships or personal connections to get on a guest list, might be required to

enter. Access to these spaces is often also regulated on the basis of age. Restrictions can arise indirectly—having independent transportation or the financial means to afford a night out—and directly—through policies such as age-control (Valentine 2003, 38). For teenagers in the contemporary North, for instance, the law usually prohibits their consumption of alcohol and consequently restricts their participation in nightlife spaces. Accepting Valentine's (2003) observations that a lack of personal funds and independent transportation, as well as laws and policies, restricts many youths' access to nightlife spaces, I will now consider more closely how these aspects come into play in Shanghai.

Students in Shanghai stress that restrictions are comparably fewer in China than they are elsewhere. Lacking funds is less of a problem, too. Many common items and services that would cost the same or more in Germany are affordable for the students in Shanghai, given their parents' income—and despite those items being relatively expensive by the local economy's standards. As I described in Part II, Chapter 1 "Making sense of the city," access to transportation is also comparably easy. Returning home late in Shanghai—even after the subways system closes at eleven p.m.—proves easy, because taxis are readily available and affordable for expat youth. Not only transportation, but also safety, according to the two students Peter and Marco, is less of a concern here than in Germany.

> PETER: *Generally the city is very peaceful, I mean the clubs. That is also due to the police state.*
>
> MARCO: *I don't know. I've never experienced [nightlife] in Germany. I've never gone out in Germany. And I don't know what to pay attention to. I've heard things like the last buses leave at twelve. And because taxis are relatively expensive in Germany, everyone all of a sudden leaves at twelve. Well, and here some leave at one, others at four. Also because of the safety, you can just walk somewhere. You could get lost and wouldn't be robbed.*
>
> PETER: *Yes, in any case you don't need to be afraid here.*[12]

Most crucial, however, is that age-based restrictions on bar and club entry are almost non-existent. Although the Chinese government introduced the legal drinking age of eighteen in 2006 (*China Daily* 2006; International Center for Alcohol Policies 2010), I have never witnessed ID control at any club or bar in Shanghai. In fact, there are no restrictions at all if you can

12 German original: PETER: *Überhaupt, die Stadt ist sehr friedlich. Also die Clubs. Das liegt eben aber auch an dem Polizeistaat.* MARCO: *Ja, also ich weiß nicht. Ich hab das in Deutschland nie so erlebt. Ich bin in Deutschland nie weggegangen. Und dann weiß ich auch nicht worauf man da achten muss. Ich hab auch so Sachen gehört, man. Um zwölf oder so fahren die letzten Busse. Und weil in Deutschland Taxi relativ teuer ist, sind dann um zwölf auf einmal alle weg. Ja und hier geht der eine halt um eins, der andere um vier. […] Eben halt auch wegen der Sicherheit: Man kann auch mal irgendwo hingehen. Man kann sich auch mal verlaufen und man würde nicht ausgeraubt.* PETER: *Ja, also Angst braucht man hier auf keinen Fall haben.*

afford the entrance fees. Teenagers are allowed to enter these bars and clubs and even gain unlimited access to alcohol at their so-called "open bars."

Without policy-based spatial restrictions on the basis of age, and with access to independent mobility and money, the only limitations in the experience of Shanghai's nightscapes that these youths face are those imposed by their parents. Most parents do not allow their children to participate in all activities and, for my research subjects, participation in nightlife is a subject of ongoing negotiation with their parents. The teenagers report that one common reason for parents to limit nightlife activity is considering their children too young for these spaces.

> KRESSI: *Usually, on Fridays, some people want to go out. Because it's always someone's birthday. But I'm only fifteen and therefore I'm not allowed [to go out] every week.*[13]

Another reason for restricting nightlife activity is the parental demand to focus on school performance, as Alex, in a group discussion with Bjorn and Don, shares.

> ALEX: *I don't remember when that was. That was sometime last year. My mother came into my room and said this sentence to me. I still wanted to go somewhere during the week, and she said, "The week is only for school. And on the weekend you can go out." Because it had never been like that before. [...] That totally annoyed me.*
>
> ALL: *<L>*
>
> ALEX: *Really! She entered, "Well, from now on you will use the week only for school. Nothing else, only focus on school." And then a sort of protest built up in me, a counter position.*[14]

As Alex's story shows, negotiations between the youths and their parents around nightlife can be conflictual and lead to tension. Some students report that they try to avoid these confrontations by lying to their par-

13 German original: KRESSI: *Also meistens ist es so, dass freitags irgendwelche Leute feiern wollen gehen. Weil irgendwelche Leute immer Geburtstag haben. Aber ich bin ja erst fünfzehn und daher darf ich auch nicht jede Woche. Und jetzt in letzter Zeit war es eben öfter, wegen Olivias Geburtstag und wegen Semester, und ehm, diesen Freitag noch einmal wegen Mias Geburtstag. Und auch in den Ferien, aber sonst so DVD Abende.*

14 German original: *ALEX: Ich weiß nicht wann das genau war. Das war irgendwann letztes Jahr. Da kam meine Mutter in mein Zimmer und sagte dann zu mir den Satz so, als ich nämlich noch während der Woche noch irgendwo hin wollte, sagte so: „Ja, die Woche ist nur für die Schule. Und das Wochenende kannst du weggehen." Weil das war vorher nie so. Das war. Das hat mich total gestört.* ALLE: *<L>* ALEX: *Also wirklich. Sie kam rein: „Ja, die Woche nutzt du jetzt nur für die Schule. Nichts anderes, nur auf die Schule konzentrieren." Und da hat sich bei mir selber so eine Art Protest gebildet, ein Gegenwillen.*

ents. During a group discussion, the three girls Charlie, Olivia, and Antonia discuss their ways of occasionally finding ways to work around parental objections to having a night out.

CHARLIE: *I am not allowed to go out that often, from my parent's side.*
OLIVIA: *Hmm. Me neither.*
ANTONIA: *Me neither.*
OLIVIA: *Yes, but I don't lie to them.*
ANTONIA: *Me neither. <L> Sometimes. One time. <L>*
INTERVIEWER: *Sometimes you have to find solutions so you can still go, one could say. How do you do that? I also used to do that.*
CHARLIE: *Sleep over at someone else's place*
OLIVIA: *She always sleeps at [a friend's] place.*
ANTONIA: *I usually say "Mama, I am going to friends and I will sleep at their place." That actually is half the truth, because first I go to friends, often before [going out] and later I sleep over at their place. It's only what's in-between <L> that's missing.*
CHARLIE: *I don't understand why parents have something against it. I mean they don't know that we're drinking there. And they think we're dancing. I always say, "We're going dancing."*
ANTONIA: *Yes, I too, usually say, "Mama, I'm going dancing." Well, in Chinese there is no word for clubbing or something. I just say, "Yes, Mama, I'm going dancing."*
CHARLIE: *I mean when I go to a sleepover, I'm also staying up late.*[15]

While some students come up with strategies to overcome parental authority with the help of friends, a few students simply rebel and act against their parents' guidelines. Seventeen-year-old Paul, for instance, shares:

INTERVIEWER: *What do [your] parents say?*
PAUL: *Well, my parents didn't know. We snuck out. And eventually they started letting me go out.*

---

15 German original: CHARLIE: *Ich darf gar nicht so oft von meinen Eltern aus.* OLIVIA: *Hmm. Ich auch nicht.* ANTONIA: *Ich auch nicht.* OLIVIA: *Ja, aber ich lüg sie nicht an.* ANTONIA: *Ich auch nicht. <L> Doch manchmal. Einmal. <L>* INTERVIEWER: *Manchmal muss man Lösungen finden damit man trotzdem gehen kann, sozusagen. Wie macht ihr das dann? Hab ich früher auch gemacht.* CHARLIE: *Bei jemand anders übernachten. OLIVIA: Sie schläft immer bei [einer Freundin].* ANTONIA: *[...] Ich sag immer: „Mama, ich geh zu Freunden und ich übernachte dann bei denen." Das ist ja eigentlich auch die halbe Wahrheit. Weil erst mal geh ich immer zu Freunden, meistens vorher und später übernachte ich bei ihnen. Das ist einfach nur so der Zwischenraum <L> der fehlt.* CHARLIE: *Ich versteh nicht was Eltern dagegen haben. Ich mein, die wissen ja nicht, dass wir da trinken. Und die denken, wir tanzen. Ich sag immer tanzen gehen. „Wir gehen tanzen."* ANTONIA: *Ja, ich sag auch immer: „Mama, ich geh tanzen." Also im Chinesischen gibt es kein Wort für „clubben" oder so. Da sag ich einfach: „Ja, Mama, ich geh tanzen."* CHARLIE: *[...] Ich meine, wenn ich bei jemanden übernachte, dann bleibe ich auch lange wach.*

In the same interview, however, Paul also admits that, for this behavior, he was grounded for a whole school year from any nightlife activity. These stories seem to be the parental nightmares that circulate among the expatriate community and fuel images of unruly teens.

Nightlife and alcohol consumption among teenagers are seen as a severe problem in the parental expatriate community in Shanghai. While a full discourse analysis is beyond the scope of this ethnography, I gained an overview based on local expatriate magazines, discussions with the community organization Shanghai Lifeline, an interview with a school counselor, and observations at talks targeted at expatriate parents. The discussions on teenage nightlife practices in Shanghai can be seen as oscillating between debates on health concerns on the one hand and what might be considered moral panic on the other.

The easy access to clubs and bars, health concerns, and fear of possible alcohol addiction, for instance, are discussed in detail in the article "Teenage Drinking" in the Summer 2007 issue of *City Weekend: Shanghai Parents and Kids*. The article teaser warns: "Buying alcohol in a convenience store is as easy as buying soda. With alcohol abuse on the rise amongst teenagers in Shanghai, a 16-year-old teen and his mother share their story" (Cheng 2007). Many articles and talks given to the community are targeted at parents. I was not surprised to see the announcement for an event entitled "Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll" at an international school in Pudong in the fall of 2010. The evening event, well-attended by parents, hosted a social worker and a speaker from the British Consulate. They gave insights into how to talk with teens about alcohol and drugs, and about the legal consequences of drug abuse in China. Parents were particularly concerned about clarifying rumors that an entire family could be deported from Chinese territory if one of their children was caught in possession of drugs.

Measures aiming to counteract alcohol abuse among teenagers have also been taken. In 2010, a telephone help-line service targeted at expatriates called Shanghai Lifeline, was in the midst of establishing workshops for youths to inform, counteract, and/or prevent alcohol or drug abuse. Likewise, the Community Center Shanghai established a program called Interkom in 2007, which was advertised as a program that "provides a positive alternative to the rise of drug and alcohol abuse and accessibility to high risk activities to international teens in Shanghai" (*Community Center Shanghai. Guide: Welcome (back) to Shanghai* 2010, 14). Parents, as I learned in a personal conversation with an employee of the Shanghai Lifeline project, also managed to influence certain restaurants in the Jinqiao expatriate residential areas to refrain from providing alcohol to minors by threatening to blacklist these locations—mostly western-style family restaurants—within the expatriate community. Some of the international schools have reacted to the open bars and the heated debate among Shanghai's expatria by introducing regular drug testing.

While these discussions very likely take place in other countries and environments as well, these negotiations seem particularly present for

expatriate families in Shanghai because parents are the only de facto regulating authorities. An article entitled "Shanghai's Tormented Teens," *Global Times China,* an online newspaper, reviewed a talk by a Shanghai-based doctor, Tim Kelly, on understanding teenagers. Kelly noted that "often families find that whatever were vulnerable points before coming to Shanghai, like arguments about curfews and homework, become exacerbated here" (Peterson 2011).

From the teenagers' perspectives, however, nightlife is an ideal way to forge ties with their peers. I observed that students who are not allowed (or willing) to accompany their peers to nightlife activities are pitied by their classmates and sometimes have difficulty positioning themselves within their class or certain peer groups. It is also noteworthy that, in this context, my relationships with the teenagers whom I regularly joined for nightlife activities became closer than those of the other students I interviewed and resulted in further invitations to participate in activities.

2.3 Practices and transformations: the Friday night routine

The last two subchapters described Shanghai's nightscapes as global, mainstream, and having links to Shanghai's past, as well as the absence of age-based restrictions to clubs and alcohol and the resulting negotiations between parents and teenagers. In this section, I highlight one specific place that is popular among the groups from the German school: a club called Mural. The club was by far the one students frequented most, which is why a detailed description and analysis of how the teenagers' nightlife practices and the meanings embedded in them were acted out in this specific location offer important insights. I discuss seven aspects that are relevant for understanding the teenagers' typical nights out at Mural: 1. The social aesthetics of the club, 2. Friday night as a marker between school routines and the weekend, 3. How the club and its open bar allow teenagers to play with age identities, 4. The gendered ways of going out, 5. Nightlife practices as a group activity, 6. Nightlife spaces as stages for cosmopolitan performances, and 7. Going out as an urban experience.

MURAL: THE CLUB AND ITS SOCIAL AESTHETICS

Mural, with its open bar, is the students' club of choice for a typical Friday night out.[16] Their regular visits to Mural, the repetition of certain practices there, and the students' familiarity with the physical surround-

16 While other bars, such Tera 57 (a fair priced cocktail bar that sometimes lets guests put on music) and Windows (a cheap sports bar), occasionally serve as locations to warm up for further clubbing, for the two groups these are merely substitutes for Mural if a change is needed for some reason.

ings contribute to the formation of what David MacDougall (2006) refers to as a "shared aesthetic space" among the teenagers. Drawing again on MacDougall's concept of "social aesthetics," which describes "the creation of an aesthetic space or sensory structure" (ibid., 105), I depict here the material environment as well as practices that shape the experience of a night at Mural. MacDougall does not understand "aesthetics" in the traditional sense, that is as notions about beauty or art, but as a "wider range of culturally patterned sensory experience" (ibid., 98). He sees the social aesthetic field as the coalescence of different elements, such as objects and actions, and finds it a "physical manifestation of the largely internalized and invisible 'embodied history' that Bourdieu calls habitus" (2006, 98). While MacDougall applies his concept to a boarding school in India, I believe certain social aesthetics of a nightclub can be experienced similarly. Ben Malbon (1998), similarly to but independent from MacDougall's social aesthetics, describes how a shared space is created in nightclubs not only through sensory experiences (lighting, music, physical proximity to others), but also through the repetition of certain practices. Malbon (1998, 276) argues: "Acting out certain roles, dressing in a similar manner, dancing in a certain way, even drinking similar beers are all ways in which the affinity of the group can be reinforced, the territory of the club experience claimed." In this creation of certain social aesthetics, Malbon (1998, 280) also thinks that clubbers actively shape their experience: "the club situation offers clubbers opportunities to inscribe their own creativities upon a shared space to create a space of their own making of which they are also the consumers." What kind of social aesthetic, with its patterns and emotional effects, does a Friday night at Mural hold for expatriate youths?

Mural lies in the heart of the city, just off Hengshan Road, a popular bar and boutique street that was already central during the time of the former French concession, and underwent large-scale renovation in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. The bar is conveniently located near a subway station and is close to restaurants and some local shops. In the evenings, street vendors selling cigarettes greet you outside as you enter the building and proceed down the stairs to the basement. The club itself is spacious, features a long bar, a section with tables and chairs, another area with couches and low tables, and an elevated dance floor. There are no windows and the lighting is unobtrusive, with tea lights on the tables adding to the atmosphere. Mural's owners present the bar on their website using images of the location sitting empty, with tastefully-arranged furniture and enveloped in a warm light. The accompanying text informs the online visitor:

> Welcome to 5000 Years of History!!! To the story of the silk road, to rumours and legends, to Mogao caves and their past. With its fantastic interior, its traditional paintings, and its cultural relics, the bar will surely provide you unforgettable moments, besides the interior the bar of course offers much more. Live-bands and performances,

> exhibitions and shows, DJ Parties, Concerts … All this will come up with a mix of Chinese tradition and western new age!!! (“Mural Bar and Restaurant | Shanghai” 2013).

My personal impression of the club was quite different. While the cave-like atmosphere is strongly supported by its basement location, the theme “5000 years of history” is easily forgotten when the place is packed to its limits on a Friday night. Interestingly, the “mix of Chinese tradition and western new age” is attempted not only through decorations such as wooden tablets adorned with old Chinese text, but also through Sanskrit words and depictions of sutras on the stone walls. These decorations, however, seem to regularly disappear behind clubgoers. Students could not recall these wall decorations in detail when I asked about them, despite regularly spending their Friday nights in the club. The social aesthetics of the bar are also tied to specific events and their themes. Mural hosts a ladies’ night on Wednesdays and a salsa night every Monday. It is only on Fridays, however, that the two groups of friends, “the girls” and “the boys” (see Part I, Chapter 3), choose Mural as their standard location (Figure 22).



Figure 22. Mural’s Cave-like Atmosphere. Photo by M. Sander.

Every Friday night, Mural hosts an open bar. Its website announces this weekly event as “Up Your Funk,” and underlines this with the call “Free ya mind … and ya ass will follow.” This, the website assures its visitors, will be achieved by the “hottest DJs” and the open bar. The music usually consists of a mix between soul, funk, disco, and other genres, going through different phases as the evening progresses. A dress code is not enforced and jeans, sneakers, or t-shirts hinder no one from entering. Guests

are mainly in their twenties. I estimate the ratio of Chinese and foreign patrons attending the club on Friday nights at roughly 1:2. The proportion of female to male clubgoers is comparable. The open bar means that the cover charge of RMB 100 (€11) covers all drinks, from soft drinks and beer, to cocktails and liquor. At the bar, you are served the first three kinds of drinks, while guests are given two different kinds of shots at a special table set up next to the entrance and the cloakroom. "The boys" always book a table with three couches in advance. This couch section serves as home base during the evening for both "the girls" and "the boys." Students come and go, moving back and forth between the bar, dance floor, and the stairs just outside the club. The open bar ends at two a.m., usually leading to many guests going home or moving on to the next location.

For the students, the most important parts of the club are arguably the people, music, the couches, and the special setting of the open bar on Friday nights. As their favorite club, Mural produces, through its location, decor, drinks, and guests' practices of dressing and socializing, a specific landscape that the students perceive as particularly "relaxed."

LETTING LOOSE: FROM SCHOOL-WEEK TO WEEKEND

Drawing on sociologist Joseph Gusfield's (1987) symbolic interactionist analysis of typical American drinking practices, which demonstrates "the symbolic meaning of alcohol in the temporal organization of daily and weekly life for a large segment of the American population" (1987, 75), I see the practices of going out, dancing, and consuming alcohol as markers between the school-week and the weekend for these teenagers, who often conceptualize nightlife in the same way:

> LARA: *I party every Friday. That is a privilege. It is a must after the week. I couldn't do without it. That would be too boring.*[17]

Linked to this understanding of Friday night routines as rituals to mark the transition from the tightly-structured school-week to the weekend, teenagers also put forth the idea of partying as a reward for working hard in school.

The Friday night routine usually starts with a shared taxi ride to the downtown area—I never witnessed anyone taking the metro to go out. Sometimes, students also dine out together before clubbing. For "the girls," the night often begins with communal dressing up. The appropriate party outfit is an important ingredient of the nightlife experience and supports the break between week and weekend. When I join the group for the first time on a night out in January 2011, meeting them at Mural after

17 German original: LARA: *Also jeden Freitag geh ich feiern. Das ist Privileg. Das muss sein nach der Woche einfach. Ich könnte auch nicht ohne. Das wär zu langweilig.*

having texted Antonia who invited me, I feel a little bit out of place and have trouble determining which topics and practices are appropriate. My early field notes from this night out later remind me of these beginnings: "The girls were also dressed accordingly: high heels, tight leggings, short skirts or leopard-print dresses … I felt a bit clumsy in my jeans and sneakers next to those sixteen-year-old beauties, all dressed up for their night out" (fieldnotes, January 2011).[18]

I naively thought that jeans and sneakers would be appropriate for a rather casual place like Mural. But while the club does not demand a certain dress code, the girls enjoy the ritual of dressing up. They even document this ritual on Facebook by posting photos of themselves with eyelash curlers, before their bathroom mirrors. Through different clothes and drinks, the weekend is thus conjured up and the school world, which poses particular social relationships for the teens, is transformed into the entirely different sphere of weekend nightlife.

ACTING MATURE: FROM TEEN TO CLUB GUEST

During their Friday nights at Mural, some students like to stay on the couches, drinking, smoking, chatting, and listening to music, while others enjoy themselves on Mural's elevated dance floor. The students get up in turns to stand in line at the bar to fetch beers or long drinks, or, occasionally, to get a round of shots at the small bar for the group. Similar to how Gusfield (1987, 81) describes that, by buying rounds, "each person takes responsibility for payment of the drink of all members of the group, no matter what his own consumption will be or has been," the open bar allows the teenagers to provide their friends with drinks and to show they care for their group without having to ask their friends for money or put a strain on their allowance (Figure 23).

Thus the attractiveness of the open bar does not necessarily lie in the possibility of binge drinking or getting drunk cheaply, but rather in the way it allows the teenagers to foster ties with their friends. When they bring each other drinks, teenagers strengthen the overall interaction within the group and feel that they have provided for each other. Without having to worry about spending too much, each person can get something for everyone, and feel he or she has contributed equally.

By enabling teenagers to "buy" drinks for others, the open bar at Mural also provides the youths with a space to practice "typical" adult patron behaviors that they might associate with nightlife spaces. This testing and practicing of "appropriate" ways to behave in bars and clubs is similar to sociologist Yuki Kato's (2009) observations of teenagers' practices in American suburban malls. By exploring the two different practices of "sitting cars" (how a group of teenagers she studied referred to hanging out in

18 I wrote most of my field notes in German; this is a translation.



Figure 23. Friday Night: Gathering with Drinks around the Table. Photo by M. Sander.

parking lots) and "browsing," which is described as "a way of interacting with the merchandise, as one contemplates a purchase, either by looking at or testing the product" (ibid., 58), Kato demonstrates how youths actively negotiate the behavioral norms associated with various parts of suburban commercial spaces in the US. Based on the observations of these spatial and social practices, Kato argues:

> Teenagers' social in-between place may be embodied in their experiences of locating and performing with their bodies in public space. While performing in commercial space, young people share physical space with adults and explore their positionalities vis-à-vis the norms associated with the space. Some adapt eagerly and flawlessly to this performance, while others choose to avoid such constraints by opting to spend time away from adults' or authorities' eyes. These experiences of adolescents must be understood in the spatial and the social contexts in which they come of age, as their daily encounters with opportunities and constraints vary by place (Kato 2009, 53).

While engaging with nightlife spaces, expatriate teenagers in Shanghai—like the young people in the suburban malls Kato anaylzes—"share physical space with adults and explore their positionalities vis-à-vis the norms associated with the space." The teenagers I joined in their clubbing activities therefore often behave in ways that they associate with mature adults. In her description of the teenage customers in the shopping mall under study, Kato points out that accepting and performing the role of a cus-

tomer—or, in this case, as a club or bar guest—"requires one's tacit knowledge of behavioral norms associated with being in the commercial space" (Kato 2009, 57).

Similarly, regarding these negotiations of norms and practices in light of the liminal social space of youth, Jeremy Northcote (2006), who investigated eighteen to twenty-four-year-old youths clubbing in Perth in the mid-1990s, sees, in these nightlife practices, "self-made quasi rites of passage" (2006, 14). Likewise, nightlife practices for expatriate teens in Shanghai can be seen as transitional pathways to a more "mature" status in society.[19] Discussing nightlife activities with the two boys Paul and Matthias, then seventeen and eighteen years old, confirms how teenagers themselves see going out as tied to age-identities. They describe participation in nightlife spaces as self-made tests of courage.

PAUL: *Shanghai is a bit of a distraction. Really.*
INTERVIEWER: *How come?*
PAUL: *Well, like really easy […] Biggest distraction. Cause anyone can go, any age. Really. Back in the day, like, kids didn't go out clubbing. But now it's more and more common. We were probably the first kids to go out. We were like thirteen, fourteen at the time. Now it's even younger than that.*
INTERVIEWER: *What do the parents say?*
PAUL: *Well, my parents didn't know.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
PAUL: *We snuck out. And eventually they started letting me go out. But, erm. Yeah, before, back then. When, like people went out, the young kids. It was actually kind of cool, because there were so few of us. Like there were three kids in my school that went out. And I was one of them. And all of the older kids were like "Dude, you guys are awesome, this is so cool. We gonna show you all the new cool places." Right?*
INTERVIEWER: *Yeah.*
PAUL: *Back then it was really cool to go out. But now, there is like hundreds of twelve-, thirteen-year-olds out, thinking that they are like really bad-ass and stuff. It is just ridiculous, cause they don't have any self-control anymore; and it ends up the older kids have to look after the young kids cause they are drinking too much*
MATTHIAS: *Way too much.*

19 Valentine (2003) considers these self-made rituals and the perspective of youths themselves as central for scholars who want to understand the transitional process into adulthood: "In this sense perhaps rather than applying adult measures of the extent to which children have achieved 'adulthood' we need to pay more attention to the different ways young people themselves define and understand this boundary crossing. As such we also need to question to what extent social categories such as gender, race, class and sexuality actually have any meaning for young people as they grow up" (Valentine 2003, 49).

PAUL: *Can't control themselves. Just, the age has gone down. I feel old at a club now.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L> Oho! How old do I feel now?*
PAUL: *Just like the ages have gone down. The standard for being cool has, like, changed.*

The way Paul describes his early nightlife encounters at a very young age is reminiscent of a test of courage, a form of claiming new space, or in Northcote's (2006, 14) words again, a "self-made quasi [rite] of passage." Nightclubs seem like a space for the brave or the "cool" to conquer. Such conquests mean leaving childhood behind.

The relationship between identity performances and spaces becomes visible in this interview passage where being young in a space for older people is interpreted as "cool," whereas if everyone is younger than you, your "standard for being cool" changes. While he remembers the older students calling him cool as he went out at a very young age, he now finds these young kids "ridiculous" and as lacking "self-control." Coolness is related to transgressions of age-based space restrictions. Therefore we can understand expatriate teenagers' nightlife practices as ways of establishing and transforming age-identities; the nightclub provides the space for such transformations. However, we can also see the performance and affirmation of gender and group identities in these practices of "being cool" through participating in nightlife.

BECOMING COOL IN GENDERED WAYS: DRESSING UP AND DOWNING DRINKS

While "the girls" manifest their participation in nightlife and hence their coolness through dressing up and dancing, "the boys" often display their involvement in cool nightlife practices by drinking and smoking cigarettes or marijuana. The girls meet before going to the club, to get ready together by putting on make-up and changing clothes. The boys, on the other hand, get ready by consuming alcohol. Both practices are regularly documented by taking pictures and can be seen as integral parts of the night out. These gendered practices can also explain, at least partly, the two groups' different preferences of locations: the girls particularly enjoy going to upscale clubs (where a dress code requires more extravagant attire) while the boys prefer places like Mural (where the drinks are affordable). These differences in practices often reinforce the gender divide that plays a crucial role in the lives of the teenagers I met. After having occasionally witnessed the reluctance of "the boys" to have a night out with "the girls," I ask sixteen-year-old Bjorn—a mediator of sorts between the two groups—to explain.

BJORN: *If we were out as boys, different things happened than if Antonia and Charlie and all the others were there. Because we can let ourselves go much more. You know, in Germany it's not a problem. If you let yourself go and forty people watch, no harm done. But here it is enough if two people watch, who don't know that you do those things regularly, and it makes its rounds at school, because we are such a small community.*[20]

Bjorn is concerned with the issue of mutual surveillance, which he attributes to "the girls." He feels he and his male peers can "let themselves go," behave against expectations, if no one observes—or later judges—them. While at first sight the teenagers eagerly and flawlessly adapt to the common (adult) practices in the club, their ways of forming their own nightlife routines and, sometimes, ways of avoiding the expected "mature" performance become visible after a closer look. The students, for instance, like to go outside and sit on the stairs in front of the club. The security team at the entrance never makes any objections when beer is brought outside. Here, students engage in conversation more easily and get some fresh air. "The boys" often seek the privacy of a nearby back alley to smoke pot. This is perceived as a boys' zone and "the girls" do not follow. I only witnessed marijuana consumption among "the boys," which "the girls," at the beginning of my fieldwork found rather annoying. During my last stay in June 2012, however, "the girls" objected less and some of them had meanwhile tried smoking marijuana on one or two occasions. However, consuming drugs is a highly gendered activity. While both "the girls" and "the boys" drink alcohol, none of "the girls" smoke cigarettes. "The boys" usually purchase their drugs by contacting a dealer via text message to then meet them at a nearby McDonalds. Occasionally, "the boys" spontaneously buy marijuana at some of the street barbecue stalls that are set up after dusk in the lively areas of Shanghai.

TEAMING UP: NIGHTLIFE AS A PEER GROUP ACTIVITY

"I flee to the teenage group; they are my protective herd now," I hastily write in my field diary sometime in the morning hours after a night out at Mural. I describe my own reaction to a man approaching me too closely on the dance floor. Feeling uncomfortable, I simply leave the elevated dance floor, pass the crowded bar area, and retreat to the teenagers who are sit-

20 German original: BJORN: *Wenn wir als Jungs weg waren, sind halt andere Sachen passiert als wenn Antonia und Charlie und alle anderen dabei waren. Weil wir uns auch viel mehr gehen lassen können. Weißt du, in Deutschland ist das kein Problem. Wenn du dich gehen lässt und das sehen vierzig Leute, ist kein Stress. Aber hier reicht's schon wenn zwei Leute dich sehen, die nicht eingeweiht sind, dass du das öfters machst und dann geht das in der Schule rum. Weil wir so eine kleine Community sind.*

ting in their usual couch section. It is one of those moments that are commonly described in ethnographic writing as "eye-opening." Although now almost a clichéd and overly stylized aspect of the genre, such moments nevertheless demonstrate how the ethnographer feels when achieving a new level of insight. To me, this moment of dropping down on the couch next to the teenage students is reminiscent of such accounts: all of a sudden, I experience the peer group in a new way, as something protective.

Interested in the importance of the group for these teenagers' nightlife practices, I discuss the issue with Bjorn during our interview in June 2012. He shares that if one of his close friends and group members cannot afford to go out, the group will usually renegotiate their plans and meet at one of the boys' homes, instead. Nightlife activities can thus be seen as finding and displaying alliances and friendships and as crucial for friendship and peer group development. As noted earlier, those who do not partake regularly are in a more difficult position at school and find it harder to become part of a group. The peer group also forms a basis for interaction in class during the week.[21] Establishing and belonging to a social circle of friends is a process for youths all over the world. However, in an environment of constant coming and going, the task of finding friends who can communally experience the stay in Shanghai can be difficult. Bjorn recalls the beginning of his time in Shanghai almost two years earlier:

> BJORN: *It was difficult to find out which friends suited me best. In the beginning, I was hanging out with entirely different people because they had taken me in first. And the friends whom I have now, the ones I've spent the last one and a half years with, weren't even interested in the beginning.*[22]

Bjorn's comment shows how the teenage students constantly negotiate their relations, trying to find friends that "suit them best." Nightlife plays a crucial role in this process.

---

21 For a complex study of peer groups at American high schools see Murray Milner's monograph *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids* (2004). For the role of the peer group in migration experiences see Susanne Wessendorf (2007), who conducted a study on adult second-generation Italians in Switzerland. Wessendorf argues that, besides the migration experience and ethnicity forming their social networks, peer group formations during adolescence were particularly influential and involved in her informants' identity negotiations: "This is especially prevalent during adolescence, a time when social affiliations and identifications are negotiated, and when a clear sense of belonging to a specific group becomes especially important. Even if reflections about belonging remain important as people grow older, the emphasis on affiliations to particular peer groups and the need to be recognised as a member of the group become weaker" (Wessendorf 2007, 125).

22 German original: BJORN: *Ja, schwer war es wirklich herauszufinden welche Freunde am besten zu mir passen. Ich war ja anfangs noch mit ganz anderen Leuten. Weil die mich halt als Erstes aufgenommen haben. Und die Freunde mit denen ich jetzt befreundet bin, also die, mit denen ich die eineinhalb Jahre verbracht habe, die hatten am Anfang gar kein Interesse.*

The two peer groups I worked with, in addition to mutual interests and being in the same classes at school, are mainly based on gender. These gender divides are, on the one hand, strengthened by peer group nightlife routines. On the other hand, nightlife offers opportunities for the two groups and their classmates to casually interact. Sexual interests can be articulated towards members of the other group while the safety net of one's own peer group remains intact. Students' first romantic and sexual encounters emerge—although not solely—in these circles, as the connection between the peer groups and their acquaintances offer a basis for familiarity and trust. It is likely for this reason that several couples formed within the two peer groups and their extended network over the two years that I worked with them.

FLIRTING (WITH COSMOPOLITANISM)

Approaching girls or boys outside the network is seen as positive, but I rarely witnessed such interactions. Paul explains this pattern in an interview:

PAUL: *I guess, it's cool to date a chick at your school. But people around my school, they go for girls who are at different schools. Like, there is a social stigma behind dating girls of your own school.*

INTERVIEWER: *Okay, so it is more, erm, cool if you have a girlfriend at a different school?*

PAUL: *Yeah. Pretty much.*

INTERVIEWER: *Pretty much.*

PAUL: *If you have friends from different schools.*

INTERVIEWER: *How about locals? Because in my age group, like late twenties, early thirties, a lot of guys date Shanghainese girls.*

PAUL: *Older guys do, not younger guys.*

INTERVIEWER: *Okay <L> that's what I thought. [...] So, the coolest thing is to have a girlfriend at a different international school.*

PAUL: *Yeah. [...] Yeah, like the local girls are kinda too easy.*

Paul's comment on Chinese girls startled me for its derogatory quality. However, it seemed to hint at the dynamics in the expatriate community that I have come across during interviews with white expatriate women in Shanghai in 2007—processes of "othering" Chinese women as exotic, erotic, or white-men-hunters. These expatriate women, mostly so-called "trailing spouses," whom I interviewed during my first fieldwork among Shanghai's expatriate community, perceived Chinese women and their possible encounters with expatriate men (their husbands) as threatening their marriage and lifestyle. Looking into these dynamics in the nightclubs, James Farrer (2011) describes similar narratives of white foreign women feeling "sexually disadvantaged in the clubbing scene." Farrer

(2011) and Farrer and Field (2012) understand Shanghai's contemporary nightscapes, based on a term borrowed from Joan Nagel (2003), as an "ethnosexual contact zone in which individuals find solidarity within their ethnic groups, but also seek contact across ethnic boundaries, with one major form of cross-ethnic contact being sexual interaction" (Farrer and Field 2012). In the ethnosexual contact zones of Shanghai's nightclubs, spaces of both consumption and production of urban nightlife culture, racialized and gendered competitions maintain the relevance of racial categories to some extent (Farrer 2011; Farrer and Field 2012).[23] However, they also normalize certain forms of sexual sociability (Farrer and Field 2012).

> Despite the complexities of these racial and gendered topographies of contact, the ethnographic evidence here points to the continued relevance of postcolonial racial categories in a gendered competition between a dominant but fading global whiteness and a rising global Chinese racial identity. This mapping of a fractious global nightscape challenges the idea of a seamless transnational capitalist class, and instead describes racial and gendered sexual competition as an important feature of the leisure culture of transnational mobile elites (Farrer 2011, 761).

Farrer's (2011) argument that nightlife spaces in Shanghai serve as ethnosexual contact zones between locals and expatriates, simultaneously enabling encounters across racial and ethnic divides and staging racialized and gendered competitions, does not seem to be of great relevance for teenage expatriate nightlife experiences and practices. Although flirting and seeking their first romantic and sexual experience are part of their nightlife practices, these behaviors mostly remain within their social network, or at least within the network of international school students, as Paul's comment shows. Within these networks, however, romantic relationships across ethnic and racial divides are normal. The lack of flirting

23 For a positive reading of such cross-ethnic sexual contacts, see cultural historian Mica Nava's (2002) reading of British women's attraction to foreign men in the early 20th century. Focusing on commercial culture because of its responsiveness to the preferences of female customers, Nava demonstrates British women's interest in foreign culture, men, and cosmopolitanism. "Unlike the exoticizing narratives identified by critics of orientalism—in which 'other' women are cast as objects of sexual desire and the oriental landscape is represented rhetorically as erotic female—in the cosmopolitanism of the commercial and entertainment spheres, women appropriate the narratives of difference for themselves in contrary and even polemical ways" (2002, 85). Nava convincingly argues that these women's "flirtation with difference, with the outside, the elsewhere, the other" (ibid., 94) underlies an identification with the black male's position vis-à-vis the dominant white man. Her emphasis on the production of everyday cosmopolitanism, rather than racism, in the first decades of the 20th century, "however politically imperative" (ibid., 85), demonstrates the complexity and the relevance of gender-specific experiences and practices of vernacular cosmopolitanism.

with “local” Chinese in the clubs is most likely due to age, as “local” teenagers are usually nowhere to be seen in clubs and bars.

However, the desire to meet people—and preferably of diverse backgrounds—outside the group still exists and might be linked to what Chatterton and Hollands describe as lifestyle performance and distinction:

> Motivations for engaging in nightlife activity have also changed. While immensely varied, changes in the nightclub and pub/bar sectors mean that music, socialising, atmosphere, dancing and lifestyle performance and distinction are now among the main motivations for a night out (Hollands, 1995; Chatterton and Hollands, 2001), alongside more traditional reasons such as letting go, courtship or seeking casual sex (Chatterton and Hollands 2003, 69).

International encounters are a popular theme for nightlife stories told in school during the following week, whether the story-teller met “crazy Australians,” “cool Canadians,” or generally anyone who was from elsewhere. These retellings stress the cosmopolitan possibilities of Shanghai’s nightscapes. The encounters themselves, however, were—in my impression—fewer than the stories make them seem. The teenagers often stay in their group and nightlife remains a peer group experience. What is more, it is also a strong selling point for Shanghai, because it offers answers to the desire for urban and cosmopolitan identities. By conquering the spaces of Shanghai’s nightscapes, the teenagers not only repeatedly aspire to, negotiate, and confirm their youth and independence, along with their friendships and gender performances, but also express their “lifestyle performance and distinction” (Chatterton and Hollands 2003, 69) as being both cosmopolitan and urban. These cosmopolitan aspirations, or “flirting with difference” as Nava calls it (2002, 94), go hand in hand with a desire to be involved in the “urban imaginary,” a “flirting with [the] space” (Crouch 2005, 23) that is Shanghai.

CLAIMING THE CITY: FROM SUBURBAN TO URBAN IDENTITIES

Interestingly, in the interview passage quoted earlier in this chapter, Paul describes the city as influencing his life, saying, “Shanghai is a bit of a distraction.”

His comment reminds me of Sharon Zukin’s point, that we not only claim spaces as our own, but that we are “claimed in turn by them” (2005, 284). This shows a strong identification with the city and conjures up Ulf Hannerz’s ([1996] 2001) description of the city as spectacle. Nightlife is a part of this “Shanghai spectacle” that the international teenagers do not merely gaze at, but—at least to the extent that they are comfortable—participate in: “the spectacle of the world city is something people constitute mutually. Everybody is not merely an observer, but a participant observer,

and the prominent features of the spectacle may depend on one's perspective" (Hannerz [1996] 2001, 133).

Hannerz (2001) also points out that "world cities" such as Shanghai are connected to other cities and their peripheries. According to Hannerz, privileged migrants (such as the expatriates under study) are particularly involved in processes of connecting and building up the image of world cities:

> The managerial elites, as people in strong organizations, may stand a better chance than others to extend their habitats from the world cities into their other locations; corporate cultures are exported, to become more or less conspicuous, prestigious and influential in the periphery as well. The expressive specialists, when and if they return to their places of origin, are likely to become noticeable proponents of new styles in cultural commodities. Even if they go back to operating mostly in the respective local cultural market-places of the periphery, it is quite possible that their sojourns in world cities play a part, directly or indirectly, in enhancing their reputations. [...] Together, all these, and returned tourists as well, may turn out to be conduits for the continued cultural flow from the world city, with their attention habitually turned its way, and with some investment perhaps at least emotionally in maintaining open channels (Hannerz [1996] 2001, 138–139).

Hannerz's description points to the fact that the young expatriate students also contribute to Shanghai's global nightscapes and global image through their involvement in the nightlife scene and its representation to others. Based on Field's (2008) and his own findings (Farrer 2002), Farrer argues that "Expatriates—especially European and American and overseas Chinese—have long been visible consumer market leaders in Shanghai, and even important 'attractions' in Shanghai's nightlife scenes" (Farrer 2011, 749).

The youths' practices can therefore strengthen or challenge the ideas and norms associated with a certain nightlife space, the location's distinctiveness, and their own positions in these.

Returning to Paul's statement above, I wish to point out that he seems to equate Shanghai with nightlife practices. It is important to remember, that after spending the week in the family housing compounds and on the school campus (see Part III), the clubs in the former French concession, Jing'an district, and the Bund become getaways while also providing the basis for regular involvement with the city. Northcote (2006) concisely points out how cities and nightlife are inextricably linked. On the one hand, "the nightclub itself amplifies the elements of urbanity"—for instance "movement, sound and visual excitement"—and represents the mythical excitement of the city (Northcote 2006, 7). On the other hand,

> club-goers themselves see nightclubs as inextricably part of the urban scape. Nightclubs are, along with pubs, cafes, restaurants and theatres, a prominent component of city night-life, and club-goers themselves do not tend to treat nightclubs as significations of an urban setting as much as intrinsic elements of that setting. Hence, nightclubs have become something of what Baudrillard (1983) refers to as a "simulacrum"—originally the signifier, but now the signified. Inside the nightclub, the carefree hedonistic excitement of youth and popular culture merges indistinguishably with the freedom and excitement of life in the big city (Northcote 2006, 7–8).

Likewise, students regularly reduce their relationship with Shanghai to nightlife activities. Nightlife therefore plays a key role in the migration process of expat youths by enabling them to identify Shanghai as "their" city.

Furthermore, Paul's statement ("Shanghai is a bit of a distraction") through stressing the city's lure, also indirectly contrasts Shanghai to other places that might not have the same tempting potential. Attending to this contrast in more detail, German school student Andrea makes a clear distinction between the "Dorfkneipen" (country pubs) she knows from Germany and the restaurants she enjoys frequenting in Shanghai.

> ANDREA: *But then again it's so great that you can just drive up to the Bund, if you want. […] And then you can go out for really lovely food. In Germany you have to, I don't know, there are these kinds of country pubs somewhere. It's not that exclusive. Shanghai is exclusive. That's nice.*[24]

This juxtaposition of "exclusive" urban nightlife in Shanghai to "Dorfkneipen" is often accompanied by comments on age-based restrictions to nightlife spaces in Germany. All youths going to bars, concerts, or clubs are eager to point out that their peers back home are not allowed to enjoy these spaces as freely. Instead, they have to organize house parties.

> ANTONIA: *But there are [ID] checks, so there are more house parties. Also because it is expensive. And so cheap in China. That's why we go out partying every weekend.*[25]

---

24 German original: ANDREA: *Aber dann ist es eben wieder so toll, dass man eben an den Bund fahren kann wenn man will. […] Und dann kann man schön Essen gehen. In Deutschland muss man dann, ich weiß nicht, da gibt es dann so Dorfkneipen irgendwo. So exklusiv und so ist es nicht. Shanghai ist exklusiv. Das ist schön.*

25 German original: ANTONIA: *Also da gibt es Kontrollen, da gibt es dann mehr Hauspartys. Auch weil es so teuer ist. Und in China so billig. Deswegen gehen wir jedes Wochenende feiern.*

French school student Arnaud also comments on the difference between house parties and club visits, contemplating the various behaviors that go along with the social aesthetics of these spaces:

ARNAUD: *On weekends I usually go out to bars, and erm, maybe sometimes to clubs with friends. And I think in Shanghai it's, it's special, cause in Europe it's much more difficult to <x> in a bar or in a nightclub. You got home parties and I think it gets much more, like, fucked-up, I think.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
ARNAUD: *Because you try to stay at least a bit sober when you are in a public place. To not to mess up everyone.*
INTERVIEWER: *Okay.*
ARNAUD: *And I think it's different in a house party.*

This comparison to peers back home and their house parties,[26] evoking ideas of domesticity, serves to highlight their nightlife experiences in Shanghai as particularly urban and exciting. Arnaud also points out that nightclubs as public places require more cultivated behavior—an idea that underlines my descriptions of routine club visits as a means of practicing "mature" behavior.

After a few hours at Mural, usually when the open bar closes at 2 a.m., my young informants either enjoy the cab ride home or go to the next location. Further clubs such as Dada (a university student location), Shelter (Shanghai's "underground" venue in an old bomb shelter), Mint (a rather exclusive and expensive club at the top floor of a high-rise building that maintains guest lists and strict dress codes), Park 97 (an upscale location in the heart of the French concession), Bar Rouge (another upscale venue on the Bund), or M2 (a mid-range club with a higher percentage of Chinese locals) are possible choices. The night out usually ends with a stop at McDonald's on the way back home to the outskirts of Shanghai and the expatriate enclave.

26 For insights into teenagers' house parties, see Demant and Østergaard's (2007) article "Partying as Everyday Life: Investigations of Teenagers' Leisure Life," which explores the meaning behind such practices among Danish youths. By conceptualizing partying and alcohol consumption as a rite of passage on the one hand, but situating these events in everyday life on the other, their analysis suggests that, at such house parties, the collective consumption of alcohol is a means to transform the parents' living room into an appropriate space for partying. Using both qualitative and quantitative material, the authors demonstrate that drinking alcohol collectively does not only mean experimenting with intoxication, but "symbolises commitment to both the party and to the specific group of friends" (ibid., 517). Like the nightlife activities of the teenage subjects in this study, partying at home is, for Danish youths, also a way of reaffirming friendships. Therefore, Demant and Østergaard argue that partying is an integral part the everyday lives of adolescents. It helps them to extend their networks of friends, as well as to continuously reaffirm existing mutual attachments.

2.4 Staging youth culture: concluding thoughts on nightlife practices

While the social aesthetics of Shanghai's internationalized nightclub scene prescribes a certain way of dressing, specific practices, and financial means, the clubs do not enforce a minimum age rule. Expatriate teenagers thus negotiate access to these spaces, which would be off limits in most of their "home" countries, with their parents alone. The students successively acquire certain routine practices through regular club visits with their friends. While Farrer and Field (Farrer 2011; Farrer and Field 2012) have convincingly argued that these nightlife spaces in Shanghai serve as ethnosexual contact zones between locals and expatriates, expatriate adolescents use Shanghai's bars and clubs primarily to manifest their age, gender, cosmopolitan, and urban identities, as well as to strengthen their friendships. Furthermore, nights out provide the counterpart to an otherwise structured school life with its associated pressure. As Northcote (2006) suggests, youths' nightlife practices can be seen as small, self-made rites of passage. In other words, nightlife offers a space for transformation through repeat practices in a space that is also shared with adults. These manifold transformations in nightlife spaces, however, are not only concerned with being mature or entering adulthood, but also with enjoying and preserving their youth. The communal process of claiming youth and independence through partying is also accompanied by processes of claiming urbanity (through choosing downtown nightlife locations) and cosmopolitanism (through choosing to share a space with international clubbers). Moreover, gender performances are brought to the fore and the students' first romantic and sexual encounters often take place within this setting. Here, the network of the peer group provides a sense of safety. Simultaneously, these friendships are strengthened through the repetition of collective experiences. Like a stage offers room for performance but also for (temporary) transformations, Shanghai's clubs provide a space for teenagers to practice and explore these new narratives of the self. The meanings attributed to nightlife practices are central to their involvement with the city. By making weekends special and allowing them to claim new spaces for themselves, both collectively and without their families, these routines are a mechanism by which they adapt to the move to Shanghai. Shanghai's nightscapes therefore stage expatriate youth culture and its emplacement in the city based on the participants' own agency. It is, in other words, primarily nightlife that helps teenagers transform their enclaved experiences in the schools and compounds into more desirable young urban identities.

CHAPTER 3
The Shop: Hanging Out

While the previous chapter provided one example of expatriate youths' agency in creating their own routines and social spaces within Shanghai's global nightlife culture, this chapter examines another space and its related practices: the shop.

Students in grade ten or above at the German and French school campus are allowed to leave the school premises during the school day. The older students make use of this privilege during breaks or free periods and often have lunch outside. Consequently, it is not surprising that a French café and a German bakery are nearby, offerring familiar flavors to the schools' staff, students, and their families. The students, however, are particularly attracted to a small street in the vicinity of campus that hosts Chinese eateries and small shops selling cheap dishes, snacks, and drinks.

3.1 "The shop is our place to chill"

Here, in a narrow alley a five-minute walk from the school campus, students can get cheap drinks, purchase a lunch of fried rice or noodles, or simply hang out. The street differs from the surrounding gated communities and the other cafés and bakeries that are located near the school. The small alley is separated by a wall from the main street that runs parallel to it. When entering the lane, students are suddenly welcomed by a different atmosphere. Shabbier houses, makeshift stalls, new and broken pool tables, laundry hanging out to dry, women cleaning vegetables, and smells of fried food present a world entirely different from the school campus that was just left around the corner. The students refer to this lane, along with all its offerings and atmosphere, simply as "the shop" (Figure 24).

The shop has undoubtedly become part of the students' everyday life. Seventeen-year-old student Karina, for instance, explains her lunch break routine during the last school year:

> KARINA: *The shop close to the school is our place to chill. Well, at least it used to be. We went, I went there five times a week during lunch break. I bought something to eat, for example* gongbao *or something else.*[27] *It is incredibly tasty and pretty cheap.*

27 Karina refers to the traditional Chinese *gong bao ji ding*, a chicken dish with peanuts, garlic, and chillies.





Figure 24. The Shop: Students and Locals in the Small Alley, June 2012. Photo by M. Sander.

> *But a huge portion. They really cook well. Although, if you closely look at the environment, pretty shabby, then you think, concerning hygiene, you rather don't want to eat there. But it is really good. At the shop most students buy something to drink, bread rolls, sweets, chewing gum. It's our provider.*[28]

The shop provides a place to "chill" during lunch break, to recharge for further lessons and activities. The English word "chilling," which teenagers adapted to German grammar as "chillen," refers to specific practices of "hanging out" and seems to have spread among youths of various nationalities. Vanderstede (2011, 175), for instance, explains the spatial practice of "chilling" among Belgian youths:

> It refers to quite diverse activities and atmospheres. Most often it stands for meeting up with friends in a very "relaxed" ambience (sitting, hanging [sic] and often lying on the ground). On the other hand the same word was used to refer to more active behaviour, like wandering, roaming or cycling around in the city, physical activity games (football, teasing each other, etc.), or even playing party games. Essential for "chilling" is that it is an activity you do with friends and not with parents.

Likewise, "chilling" is a common term for German expatriate youths used to describe their communal leisure practices, which are mostly related to places such as their friends' homes or the shop.

The importance of these spaces for teenagers has also been proven in other environments. Vanderstede (2011), in his descriptions of teenagers' spatial practices in the Belgian city of Mechelen, for instance, also points out the relevance of such spaces for students' relations to the school environment.

> The presence of quality public space (traffic calming measures, comfortable spaces for hanging around and sitting) and the availability of services (food shops, snack bars, and public transport) around secondary schools are highly important for teenagers. Where such public spaces were available near the school, teenagers stayed much longer after school. School environments lacking such pub-

---

28 German original: KARINA: *Der Shop bei der Schule, das ist unser Chill-Ort. Also, er war es zumindest. Wir sind da, ich bin da auch hingegangen, klar. Irgendwie. Wirklich fünf Mal in der Woche in der Mittagspause schnell rüber. Hab mir da was zu essen gekauft, zum Beispiel das* gongbao *oder so. Das ist unglaublich lecker und eigentlich auch ziemlich billig. Dafür aber eine riesige Portion. Die kochen das wirklich gut. Obwohl, wenn man sich so die Umgebung anschaut, so ziemlich heruntergekommen, da denkt man sich so, von der Hygiene her will ich da lieber nichts essen. Aber das ist wirklich gut. Und ja, in dem Shop, da sind meistens immer Schüler, die sich was zu trinken kaufen. Irgendwelche Brötchen, Süßigkeiten, Kaugummis, alles Mögliche. Das ist unsere Versorgung da.*

> lic domain or surrounded by traffic spaces, were emptied within 10 minutes after the courses (Vanderstede 2011, 180).

The shop's appeal as a hangout place is thus, first of all, connected to its proximity to the school and the space it provides for recreation and meeting friends during and immediately after school. At the same time, being at the shop confirms the expatriate teenagers' status as "older students," which they can express through taking advantage of the privilege to leave campus during school time. The shop is therefore also an age-specific experience that, unlike the school cafeteria and the schoolyard, does not need to be shared with younger children.

3.2 "The shop is not expat:" The shop as an in-between space

Besides being frequented by expatriate teenagers, the shop also has regular local Chinese customers who usually eat at one of the restaurants (Figure 25).



Figure 25. The Shop: Inside the Small Restaurant, June 2011. Photo by M. Sander.

The shop-owners themselves, who live in the buildings, also use the space for their daily chores and leisure. Students thus describe the shop as local, Chinese, or—in Antonia's words—"not expat."[29]

29 It is interesting to note how Antonia refers to the shop as "not expat," thus making "expat" the unmarked unit of reference.

ANTONIA: *These shops, the shop is not expat. These shops exist everywhere.*[30]

While many students regularly eat out at foreign restaurants with their families or friends (see Part III, Chapter 1), the food in the small alley is, for many expatriate youths, the only local food they consume except for dishes prepared at home by their *ayi* (see Part III, Chapter 2.2). Students point out that the shop is obviously "more Chinese" than their other everyday spaces such as the compounds or their schools. Here, some of them have their only regular contact with locals, as sixteen-year-old Bjorn explains.

BJORN: *Sure, you also meet a lot of Chinese. You get to know, or I know all the shop-owners in person. They are all very open.*[31]

While it is true that the little street is frequented by Chinese locals, the fact that the shopkeepers have responded to the desires of the foreign students is immediately apparent: their inventory, for instance, includes foreign candy such as imported Haribo gummy bears, which I had never seen in any other small, Chinese-run shops in Shanghai.

The shop-owners have also set up pool tables in the street and put a small stereo outside where students can plug in their mp3 players to play their favorite songs. Furthermore, European students—as some of the teenagers shared with me—have actively shaped the spaces themselves by putting graffiti on the walls (Figure 26a).

However, the local shopkeepers still use the spaces according to their own needs. They often play pool themselves, use the tables to prepare food or display wares for the local community, or hang their laundry to air-dry outside—(see Figure 26b).

The shop thus offers a venue for experiencing the locale. It is also, according to the students, a place that is more in touch with the local Chinese population than any of the other places they frequent. They share the pool tables; they eat at the same restaurant. While the relations between shop-owners and students clearly maintain the distance between customer and service provider, the students, shop-owners, and their families also share a common leisure space by playing pool, sitting outside, eating, smoking, chatting, and relaxing together. The shop is no longer "typically local" nor is it, as Antonia pointed out in the interview, a well-groomed "expat" space; it sits in-between.

This in-betweenness also resonates with the students' own entangled claims of cultural identification and the process of gaining transcultural perspectives (see Introduction). The shop as an in-between space invites its actors to adopt a transcultural perspective with site-specific knowledge,

30 German original: ANTONIA: *Die Shops, dieser Shop ist ja nicht Expat oder so. Diese Shops gibt es ja überall.*

31 German original: BJORN: *Klar, man lernt natürlich auch viele Chinesen kennen. Also man kennt die Shopbesitzer, also ich kenn die zum Beispiel alle persönlich. Und die sind halt hier total offen.*

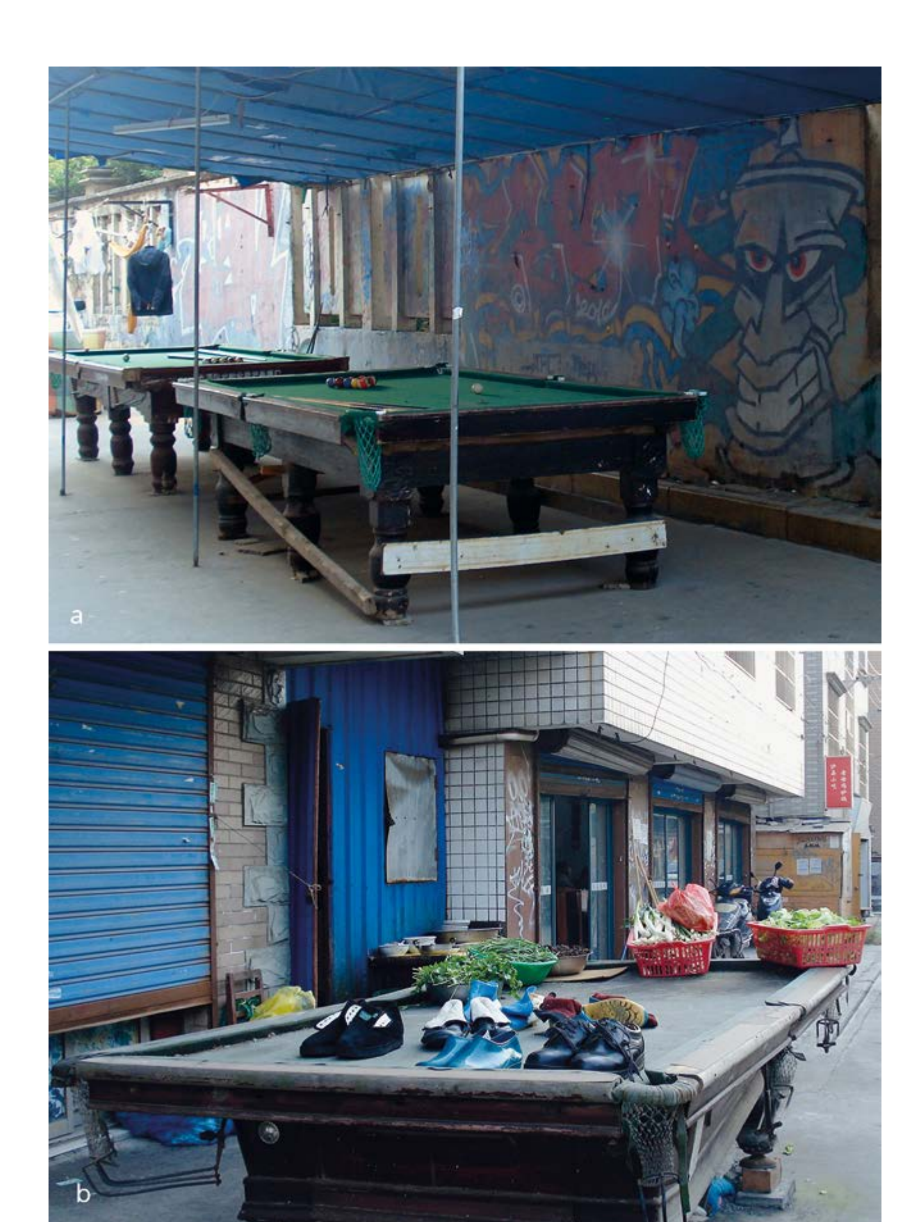


Figure 26. The Shop; a) Pool Tables, Graffiti, and Laundry, January 2011; b) Use of Pool Table to Display Wares. Photos by M. Sander.

which I myself as a researcher had to acquire in the same manner as the students. This phase of learning to navigate the area included, for instance, becoming familiar enough with the menu of the little restaurant to order their dishes in Chinese, knowing when and where to sit, or knowing how much items cost in the small shop.

3.3 "The shop is somewhat like a park:" The shop as an open space and street

Sharon Zukin's (2005, 284) article "Whose culture? Whose city?" shows how "culture is intertwined with capital and identity in the city's production systems." Investigating the roles of investors and urban planners, but also of minorities, Zukin points out that "people with economic and political power have the greatest opportunity to shape public culture by controlling the building of the city's public spaces in stone and concrete" (ibid). However, she finds that "public space is inherently democratic. The question of who can occupy public space, and so define an image of the city, is open-ended" (ibid). Zukin suggests, therefore, that public culture is

> produced by the many social encounters that make up daily life in the streets, shops, and parks—the spaces in which we experience public life in cities. The right to be in these spaces, to use them in certain ways, to invest them with a sense of our selves and our communities—to claim them as ours and to be claimed in turn by them—make up a constantly changing public culture (ibid.).

Zukin's understanding of public culture in the city as also "socially constructed on the micro-level" (ibid.) highlights how even small public spaces like the shop can be seen as part of Shanghai's larger public culture.

For the Chinese context, however, German geographer Dieter Hassenpflug (2009) suggests using the term "open space" (offener Raum) instead of "public space" to describe areas like the shop. He finds the notion of "public space" ill-fitting for the situation in Chinese urban politics because it relates to western norms of democracy, participation, and civil society (ibid., 32). He puts forward that the duality of "open" and "closed" space is better suited for understanding the urban environment in China (ibid.). The "open space," Hassenpflug suggests (ibid., 31), is usually undefined space, and is opposed to the "closed," meaningful space; it is treated with little respect (ibid., 33) unless it is claimed through rather "private" practices and rendered meaningful (ibid., 31). Hassenpflug's examples of how "open space" is used and claimed are immediately familiar to every Shanghai visitor: the laundry line on the sidewalk, people going for a stroll in their pajamas, or people playing *go*—a Chinese game similar to chess. All these practices fall within the realm of what might be considered the "private space" in Western cities. It is with the understanding of such "open

space" that the Chinese shop-owners use the little alley of the shop: there, they clean vegetables, dry laundry, and sit outside with friends, neighbors, and family members.

The dualism of "closed" and "open" space is visible in the expatriate teenagers' spatial practices as well. Bjorn's mental map, for instance, highlights the students' movements from one "closed space" to the next (Figure 27).

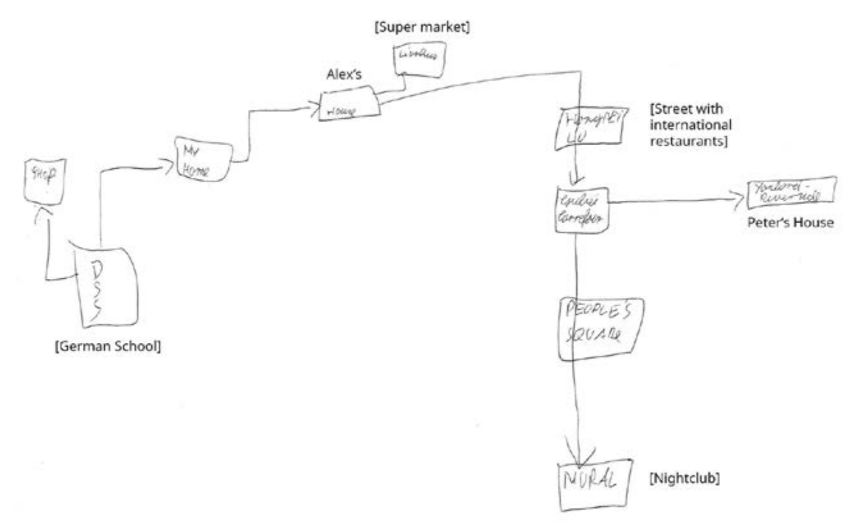


Figure 27. Mental Map of Shanghai. Drawing by 16-year-old Bjorn. Names of friends anonymized and place annotations added.

The locations displayed on this map are almost all closed and restrict entry based on financial means (the nightclub, restaurant) or limit access to those who already have a specific affiliation with the place (housing areas, school). The only two "open spaces" that Bjorn placed on his map of Shanghai are the People's Square and the shop. Shanghai's central People's Square, however, is less of a space to stay than a place of transit, due to its many intersecting metro lines. Bjorn's use of arrows in his drawing also suggests the transitory role of the square, as the arrow simply crosses through it, rather than pointing directly at the unit. If we contextualize the experience of the shop in these larger, everyday spatial experiences, the shop—despite its own rules or access regulations prescribed by the school—appears as one of the few "open spaces" the teenagers use.

I argue that it is this openness, and the fact that this liminal space provides them with the freedom and flexibility to simply hang out, that attracts the students most. Bjorn explains the usage of the shop by comparing it to public spaces in Germany. In his comparison, however, he chooses public spaces that—similar to Hassenpflug's depiction of "open space" in Chinese cities—can be claimed by hanging out in them communally, by listening to music or drinking beer:

BJORN: *For me, the shop is somewhat like a park; or what a bus stop or a playground is for youths in Germany. Practically speaking, that is what the shop is. There are no problems with disturbances or breach of the peace. […] You come here, bring your stuff along. Sit down on the pool tables and drink. You listen to music. Everything is allowed. It's like a public place in my opinion, where teenagers can just go.*

INTERVIEWER: *So you don't have to feel restricted here?*

BJORN: *At least there are no guards here. If we all meet for example at my compound, the guards pass by every two hours or so to see if we are destroying things or something like that. And here, I'd say, you are simply free.*[32]

The shop, in contrast to the guarded housing compounds as Bjorn suggests, is an "open space" that, for him, stands for freedom and escape from strict rules or even surveillance.

Bjorn's description of the shop is also reminiscent of Hugh Matthews's (2003) investigations of the use and meaning of outdoor spaces for less privileged youths in a large public housing estate in a UK town. Matthews (2003, 101) understands these spaces as "the street," a metaphor he introduces to generally refer to "all outdoor spaces within the public domain." According to Matthews, the street "acts as a liminal setting or a site of passage, a place which both makes possible and signifies a means of transition through which some young people move away from the restrictions of their childhood roots towards the independence of adulthood" (ibid.).

Matthews' idea of streets adds another dimension to spaces like the shop, that Hassenpflug's helpful, albeit limiting division of open and closed spaces does not address: the age-specific experience. For youths, streets are places where, according to Matthews (2003, 106), "adultist conventions and moralities about what it is to be a child—that is, less-than-adult—can be put aside." The concept of streets therefore also highlights the liminal stage of youth in society:

32 German original: BJORN: *Für mich ist der Shop eine Art Park oder Bushaltestelle oder Spielplatz halt in Deutschland für die Jugendlichen, das ist bei mir quasi der Shop. Wo es halt nicht die Probleme mit Ruhestörung oder so was gibt. […] Hier gehst du halt auch hin, nimmst dein Zeug mit. Hockt man sich halt auf die Billardtische und trinkt da. Und hört halt auch Musik, weil, darf man hier ja alles. Das ist eigentlich einfach wie ein öffentlicher Platz meiner Meinung nach, wo man als Jugendlicher auch hingehen kann.* INTERVIEWER: *Ohne das man sich jetzt eingeschränkt fühlen muss?* BJORN: *Das ist vor allem, hier gibt es auch keine Guards oder so was. Wenn wir jetzt zum Beispiel alle bei mir im Compound sind, kommen die Guards schon alle zwei Stunden mal vorbei und gucken ob wir was kaputtmachen oder so. Und hier ist man einfach, sag ich mal, frei.*



Figure 28. The Shop: Hanging Out in the Alley, September 2011. Photo by M. Sander.

> Within these interstitial spaces young people can express feelings of belonging and of being apart and celebrate a developing sense of selfhood. In essence, therefore, streets can be grouped among those places where the newness of hybrid identities, no longer a child not yet adult, may be articulated (ibid. 106).

The following three images, taken over the course of my fieldwork, depict the various seating areas in the shop and provide insight into the students' ways of hanging out there and using the area as an open space or, more age-specifically, as a liminal space—as a street (Figures 28 and 29).

The students describe the shop as dirty and run-down, but chilled. They can draw graffiti, listen to music, and play pool. It is a place more organically grown than the carefully designed schools, compounds, and nightclubs. Students do not do any homework or study there but socialize in a way that is less restricted than their interactions at school or in nightclubs. It is the only space they visit during the week that is outside the school and the expat compound. This little street—also "street" in Matthews's (2003) sense—can therefore be understood as a space of freedom "away from the adult gaze" (ibid., 105), where the teenagers can socialize, smoke, or take a break from school and their parents. As Bjorn further adds, "You're not at home, but you're undisturbed."[33]

33 German original: *Man ist nicht zu Hause, aber man ist halt ungestört.*

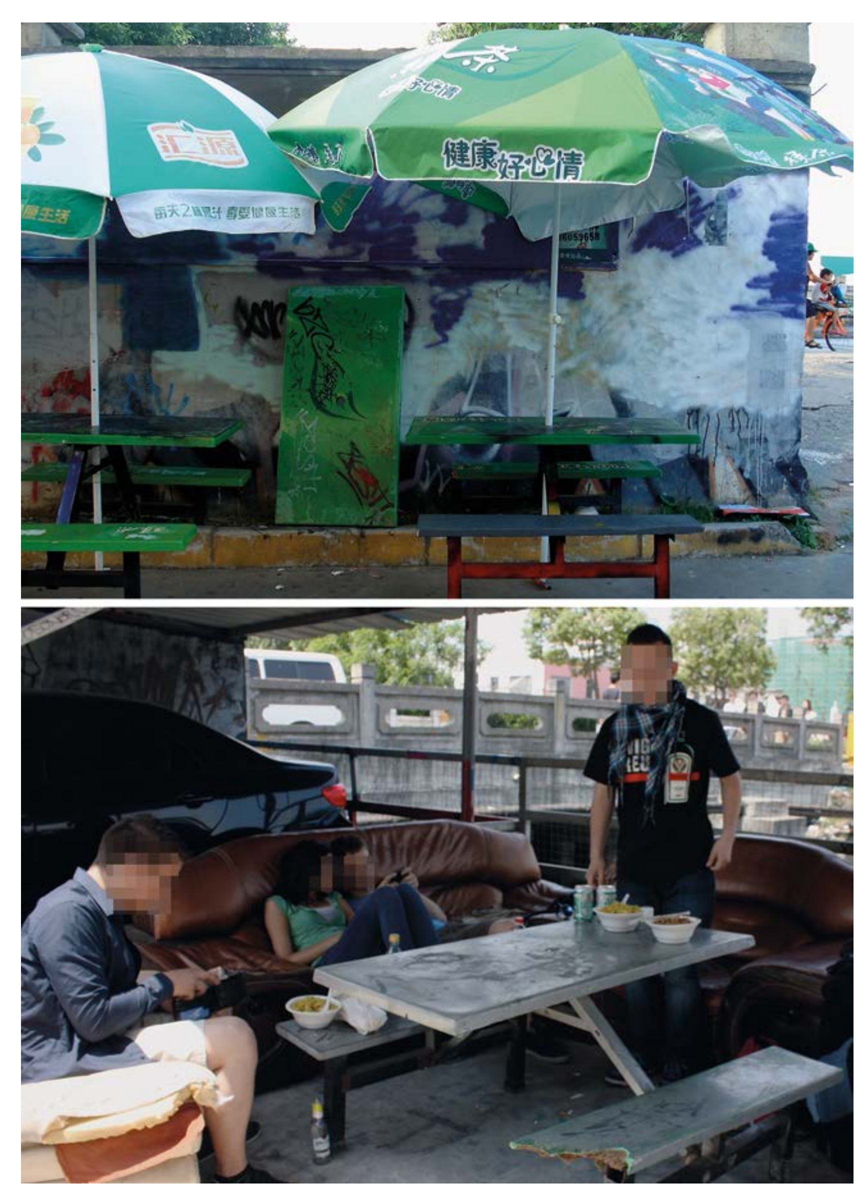


Figure 29. The Shop: Places to Sit in the Alley, September 2011 and June 2012. Photos by M. Sander.

3.4 Concluding thoughts on the shop

The shop generally serves as an “open space” in Hassenpflug’s (2009) definition, one which the local Chinese residents and the expatriate students of the German and French school campus nearby communally use and shape. For these youths in particular, however, the shop can best be understood in Matthew’s (2003) terms as “the street,” a site of passage where they need not follow behavior conventions and can articulate their age-specific identities as youths. Because the German students see this alley as a place to take a break from school or hang out, the shop offers a feeling of freedom in contrast to the rather sealed-off and surveilled spaces where they spend most of their time. Whether and when students are allowed to go to the shop, however, is still negotiated with the school authorities. At the same time, through these negotiations, the shop confirms the students’ age-identities, namely the privilege of leaving campus during school hours. The shop is a place for teenagers, not elementary school students, and can be seen as a liminal space where one can still be young while moving away from childhood roots, as Matthews’s (2003) understanding of similar spaces highlights.

The German teenagers also describe the shop as one of the few spaces that they share with Chinese locals (and one of the rare sites of interaction with them). The owners of the small eateries and stores, viewing the little street as “open space,” tolerate the students’ behaviors of cycling, listening to music, or even spraying graffiti. The youths’ practices at the shop have developed from a tacit compromise with the shop-owners, who see the teenagers’ presence as an opportunity to enhance their business and subsequently provide pool tables, couches, snacks the students know from home, and even a stereo where they can play their own music. At the same time, the shop owners and residents themselves also utilize the area as a leisure space. In this way, the shop is, in the students’ words, “not expat,” and carries another dimension of liminality or in-betweenness, thus fostering the development of transcultural perspectives. The students’ practices are consequently not only negotiated with the school nearby, but also with the shop-owners. Nonetheless, the teenagers—despite their friendly conversation and interactions with them—also remain customers. The concluding chapter of this part therefore focuses on the emplacement processes of expatriate youths in Shanghai and further examines the students’ relations to Shanghai’s “local” citizens.

CHAPTER 4
"Guests Stay Guests:" The Lack of "Local" Friends

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, exploring, experiencing, and identifying with Shanghai are crucial for enabling expatriate teenagers to both understand the meaning of their stay and to gain agency from the experience. At the same time, Shanghai—despite being an international metropolis—has been described by other scholars as exclusive in the literal sense. To be regarded as "Shanghainese," for instance, is an almost unobtainable status even for migrants from other parts of China, as sinologist Sonja Schoon's (2007) work on the relations between *waidiren*, citizens from outside of Shanghai, and *shanghairen*, or Shanghainese, has shown. Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and John Gammack (2007), who also refer to work by Lu Hanchao (1999), describe this divide and the inherent exclusion of both Chinese and foreign migrants who attempt to claim urban citizenship in Shanghai as follows:

> The very criteria for being identified as Shanghainese are vague, in view of the fact that neither by birth or language, yet definite identifications as Shanghainese (or not) can be made [...] The system of waiguo and waidiren (i.e. non-Chinese foreigners and Chinese from outside the city more generally) as official excluding categories is symptomatic of the sense of self that operates according to principles of exclusion rather than according a positive welcome to the new city strangers. In this Shanghai differs markedly from, say, London, where newcomers declare themselves Londoners within a very few years of taking up residence (Donald and Gammack 2007, 153–154).

Donald and Gammack suggest a general atmosphere of Shanghai, a "sense of self" that "operates according to principles of exclusion." In the chapters of the previous part, "Arriving," I have shown that many of the places teenage expatriates routinely frequent, such as schools and housing areas, are secluded and not even considered part of the city by the students themselves (see Part II, Chapter 1, on managing Shanghai by dividing it into "the city" and familiar spaces). Students and families draw strong boundaries around their expatriate circles and their contact with local Chinese is very limited. Consequently, Shanghai's citizens have remained rather absent in my accounts tracing the youths' everyday practices. However, the question arises if this absence is only due to the boundaries expatriates create as a means of making distinctions and finding comfort and community. What

role, if any, do the "principles of exclusion" Donald and Gammack attribute to Shanghai play in the lack of interaction between expatriate and Chinese youths?

To overcome a claustrophobic view on diasporas, sociologist Avtar Brah (1996) proposes the concept of "diaspora space" to examine "the economic, political and cultural modalities of historically specific forms of migrancy" and "the relationality of these migrancies across fields of social relations, subjectivity and identity" (1996, 16):

> Diaspora space is the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of "us" and "them," are contested. My argument is that diaspora space as a conceptual category is "inhabited," not only by those who have migrated and their descendants, but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. In other words, the concept of diaspora space (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those of "staying put" (ibid., 1996, 208–209).

Brah's term "diaspora space" aims to conceptualize the entanglement of the experiences of "migrants" and "locals." Applying her analytical concept to my work allows me to focus on the relations between the two heterogeneous groups, expatriates and "those who are constructed and represented as indigenous" (ibid., 209). To that end, this chapter investigates this "diaspora space" by exploring the relationships between expatriate teenagers and China or Chinese citizens, to further understand the boundaries I have observed and described throughout this ethnography. It also highlights how the students perceive their (lack of) interaction with Chinese citizens and how they position themselves within the greater context of Shanghai and China.

Since "diaspora space" as an abstract theoretical concept was ill-suited for the interview discussions, I simply asked students if they felt accepted in China. The teenagers reflected on their relationship to Chinese society, at which point I brought the term "integration" into the discussion. It became obvious that, for many of the students, the term "integration" had never been used in relation to their situations, but remained something they saw as reserved for less privileged migrants in Europe or elsewhere. Based on these new reflections on integration, and by tracing their views on the role of the expatriate community and what expatriate status means for them, this chapter investigates the relationship these youths felt they had with Shanghai itself (4.1). It then draws attention to a topic that emerged during interviews—the teenagers' experiences of "not fitting in," of being visibly foreign in the city (4.2). Subsequently, to shed further light on the "diaspora space," I examine the barriers to integration that the students perceived, as well as the difficulty they had making connections with Chinese youths (4.3). Finally, this chapter explores students' subjective

views of the attitude of Chinese authorities toward foreigners (4.4) and shows how integration and feelings of being accepted in China, according to these students' experiences, can only go so far as being welcomed as "a guest" (4.5).

4.1 Autonomous and special? The demarcation of the expatriate community

Part III, Chapter 3 of this ethnography identifies the international schools as hubs in Shanghai's expatriate network and explores practices and values that foster the sense of an expatriate community. These "inner" definitions are tied to the way in which expatriates consider themselves to be separate from China, which becomes visible when discussing the idea of "integration" with students.

During an interview at an Element Fresh—a restaurant chain favored by expatriates— in a downtown shopping mall in Xuijiahui, seventeen-year-old Giovanni from the German school explains:

> GIOVANNI: *In a sense you are integrated. But you actually don't need the others. You can move around quite independently. And that is why you actually only need the taxi drivers.*[34]

Giovanni's description of being able to remain independent from local Chinese or, "the others," in his words, seems based on a clear sense of a divide between "us" and "them." His opinion likely derives from the observation that relationships across this divide usually center merely around service or business, and not around casual encounters or friendships as his usage of "need" suggests. Giovanni's statement also startles me, as he does not seem at all curious about meeting any Chinese people. When I inquire further about the process of integration, he comments:

> GIOVANNI: *Erm. Integrate? You try to adapt, a little. But when you are at home, in your home or apartment, you are actually totally different again. [...] And when you are out with other foreigners, somewhere, like on Hongmeilu, then you don't adapt to China, either.*[35]

---

34 German original: GIOVANNI: *Eigentlich ist man schon integriert. Aber du brauchst die andren eigentlich gar nicht. Man kann sich hier eigentlich ganz selbständig bewegen. Und deswegen braucht man eigentlich nur die Taxifahrer hier.*

35 German original: GIOVANNI: *Eh. Einfügen? Man versucht sich halt anzupassen, ein bisschen. An die andren Sitten hier. Aber. Ja, wenn du dann zu Hause, in dem Haus oder der Wohnung bist, ist man eigentlich wieder ganz anders. [...] Und wenn man halt mit auch Ausländern unterwegs ist irgendwo, wie in der Hongmeilu, dann passt man sich auch nicht groß an. An China.*

While Giovanni acknowledges a little bit of "adapting," he sees most of the daily routine—whether at home or eating out with friends—as "totally different." Like Giovanni, American school student Paul describes the expatriates in Shanghai as forming a circle of their own.

> PAUL: *Well, yeah, everyone here kinda sits in their own group. Like, in Jinqiao,*[36] *where my school is at, it's a, like, really international community. There are very few Chinese people that live around there. So everyone just stays in that bubble. They don't have to experience China if they don't want to. They just kinda stay in that group.*

Both Paul's description of the "bubble," which I discuss in the Introduction, and Giovanni's comments on not needing "the others" illustrate how, in their experience, the expatriate community functions (to a large extent) independently of Chinese society. This image of an autonomous community is based on maintaining a unifying and comforting experience for its members, but is simultaneously linked to establishing strong boundaries towards Shanghai's other citizens.

When Giovanni and I further discuss his occasional interactions with local Chinese, I ask him to assess the Chinese perceptions of foreigners. He answers by describing a situation he has just experienced on his way to the interview:

> GIOVANNI: *I asked for directions, outside. But they don't even notice you when you speak English. They simply continue walking. And otherwise, some have a lot of respect, because you are a foreigner.*[37]

Giovanni's use of "outside" to describe his interactions with Shanghai's citizens, while sitting in a restaurant highly frequented by expatriates, underlines his perception of a strong local-expat divide. Furthermore, Giovanni addresses his experience of being treated with respect because he is so obviously a foreigner.

This treatment, along with the inherent demarcation of the expatriate community, comes up in a discussion I have with his classmate Andrea, a member of "the girls:"

---

36 As noted briefly in the Introduction, Jinqiao is part of the newly-developed Pudong area in eastern Shanghai. It hosts, in particular, many expatriate housing estates, supermarkets, and restaurants catering imported food, as well as the campuses of several international schools.

37 German original: GIOVANNI: *Da hab ich nach dem Weg gefragt, da draußen. Aber die beachten einen eigentlich gar nicht wenn man auf Englisch redet. Da gehen sie einfach weiter. Und. Sonst. Manche haben halt so Respekt, weil du Ausländer bist.*

> ANDREA: *We actually kind of live in our foreigner bubble. Yes, we are here. They don't treat us impolitely. I wouldn't say that. I also like it here. But it is not that I have many Chinese contacts. Nor do my parents have many Chinese contacts. Erm. I think we always have this special status. I always find that the foreigner in China has a very different status. […] I wouldn't say that the Chinese law applies in the same way to us.*[38]

Andrea, like Paul, uses the metaphor of the "bubble" to describe the expatriate experience in Shanghai. Furthermore, she stresses that foreigners in China have, in her words, "this special" and "very different status." Andrea, familiar with expat postings elsewhere, considers this foreigner status not only as "special" in comparison to that of the local Chinese, but also to expatriates elsewhere:

> ANDREA: *I don't know, but I find the expats here are different from expats in Singapore, or in Spain or somewhere; the foreigners, the German expats. Because here it is still, here it is still very different. Here, you still have a driver, here you also don't have to learn the language. I don't know, but if you as a German go to Mexico, and you work there, you have to learn Spanish. I think, in my opinion. And when I go to Singapore, then it is not like that either. […] If you are lucky, you get a car, I think. That's what I heard, from friends, but not everyone gets one. It is much more expensive.*[39]

In Andrea's view, the status of expatriates in Shanghai is different from that of expatriates elsewhere due to the financial benefits and clear difference between the average local income and that of expats. Andrea argues that this status has an influence on the relationships between foreigners and local Chinese: expats do not even have to learn Chinese.

---

38 German Original: ANDREA: *Eigentlich wohnen wir so in unserer Ausländerblase und. Ja, wir sind hier. Sie behandeln uns jetzt nicht unhöflich. Ich würd jetzt nicht sagen. Ich find es auch schön hier. Aber es ist jetzt nicht so, dass ich jetzt hier viele chinesische Kontakte hab. Oder das meine Eltern viele chinesische Kontakte haben. Ehm. Ich glaube wir haben immer diesen Sonderstatus. Ich find immer, der, der, Ausländer in China, besonders in China, hat der Ausländer einen ganz anderen Status. […] Also, ich würde nicht sagen, dass das chinesische Rechtssystem jetzt so unbedingt auch für uns so gilt.*

39 German original: ANDREA: *Ich weiß nicht, aber ich finde die Expats hier sind auch was anderes als zum Beispiel die Expats in Singapur, oder in Spanien oder so. Die Ausländer, also die deutschen Expats. Weil hier ist das noch so, hier ist das noch ganz anders. Hier hat man noch einen Fahrer, hier muss man auch nicht unbedingt die Sprache lernen. Ich weiß nicht, aber wenn du jetzt als Deutscher nach Mexiko gehst, und dort arbeitest. musst du Spanisch lernen. Glaube ich, meiner Meinung nach. Und wenn ich nach Singapur gehe, dann ist das auch nicht so. […] Wenn man Glück hat, dann kriegt man ein Auto, glaub ich. Also so hab ich das mitbekommen, von Freunden, aber nicht jeder hat eins. Das ist viel teurer.*

Antonia, the Shanghai veteran and child of a German-Chinese marriage, admits she enjoys the lifestyle she has here, but voices her anger over this perception of a "special status:"

ANTONIA: *And many are sometimes a little disrespectful towards China. […] Generally, how we live here, I don't know. I think it is so… Yes, I think arrogant is a good word.*
INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.*
ANTONIA: *As if we were something better or something. And then we live our lives where we just have fun and go out.*[40]

She further expands upon her view during the same interview:

ANTONIA: *And therefore we are always welcome. We come into the city. We are the foreigners, we feel better than all the others. We spend loads of money, are completely disrespectful towards money, because it is actually so little, for us. And erm, we just have fun.*[41]

Although I do not present my own critical stance on certain aspects of expatriate ways of life during interviews, Antonia's self-critique might be triggered by my presence and the questions I raise about integration. Nonetheless, her reflections on her own lifestyle and the implications of status leading to expatriates "feeling better than all the others," show the discomfort she feels regarding the relationship between foreigners and locals. She also identifies the different financial means as a dividing experience and points out that expatriates might be welcome mainly due to their high spending power. Although she criticizes expatriates' attitudes towards China as well as what other students present as a "special status," she can also relate to the experience of such a status. She argues that, in her experience, the Chinese always treat her as a foreigner in the sense that she is something special, and that this treatment inevitably hinders friendships:

ANTONIA: *You are always regarded as a foreigner. Well, not in a negative sense, a bit in a positive one, as something special. But, then again, you are also not integrated.*[42]

---

40 German original: ANTONIA: *Und viele sind auch manchmal, also, ein bisschen respektlos gegenüber China. […] Allgemein wie wir leben. Ich weiß nicht. Ich finde es so. Ja, ich glaube arrogant ist schon ein gutes Wort. So.* INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.* ANTONIA: *Als wären wir irgendwas Besseres oder so. Und dann leben wir unser Leben wo wir einfach nur Spaß haben und ausgehen.*

41 German original: ANTONIA: *Und dadurch sind wir auch immer so freundlich willkommen. Wir kommen halt in die Stadt. Wir sind die Ausländer, wir fühlen uns besser als alle anderen. Wir geben einen Haufen Geld aus, total respektlos gegenüber Geld. Weil es so wenig ist eigentlich, für uns. Und ehm. Haben einfach nur Spaß.*

42 German original: ANTONIA: *Man wird für immer angesehen als Ausländer. Also. Und nicht im negativen Sinne, sondern im positiven. So als was Besonderes. Aber, dann ist man ja auch nicht wirklich integriert.*

Antonia's argument, that the positive discrimination she experiences impedes integration, can be applied to her fellow students' experiences as well. During our discussion at the mall in Xujiahui, Giovanni, who once interned as a teacher at a Chinese sailing school, recalls how he felt that his presence was welcome merely due to the status-gain the sailing club hoped to achieve by having a (white) foreigner among their staff:

> GIOVANNI: *But the reason for [me and my brother] being there, was actually not to teach them, but rather, that [the customers] see that there are also foreigners. That was my feeling.*[43]

This experience of being presented as a foreigner to make a Chinese enterprise look more international goes hand-in-hand with the teenagers' perceptions of being treated with respect due to their physical appearance. Giovanni, however, would have liked to pursue a more meaningful role at the sailing school.

Charlie, born in Germany to Chinese parents, contrasts the different forms of reactions that she and her family have experienced towards foreigners in Germany versus in Shanghai**.**

> CHARLIE: *[Expatriates] often see China as a country where they go for a few years and then leave again. And I think people often don't really respect the country. They feel they can get away with things they would never do in Germany. Because they think they have a special status because they are foreigners. It is so different here. In Germany, if you are a foreigner, it is not necessarily regarded as positive. And here it is like that. They get excited about foreigners— "Oh, foreigners!" and so on—and are happy about it and, sometimes, even get special treatment or something. My dad caused an accident once, a small one. And then he had to show his passport at the police station. And then: "Oh my God, he is German." And so on. [...] And in Germany you will hear "ching chang chong" or something like that.*[44]

---

43 German original: GIOVANNI: *Aber der Grund warum wir da waren, war eigentlich nicht, dass wir das denen beigebracht hätten. Sondern, dass die sehen, dass da auch Ausländer sind. Hab ich so das Gefühl gehabt.*

44 German original: CHARLIE: *Oft sehen die China auch so als Land, da bin ich jetzt ein paar Jahre und dann geh ich wieder weg. Und ich finde auch oft respektieren die Leute das Land nicht so richtig. Die erlauben sich dann so Sachen die sie in Deutschland nie machen würden. Weil sie denken, sie haben hier einen besonderen Status weil sie Ausländer sind. Das ist auch hier total anders. In Deutschland, wenn du Ausländer bist, wird das ja nicht unbedingt positiv angesehen. Und hier ist das direkt so. Die freuen sich, wenn Ausländer, „oh Ausländer" und so, und freuen sich immer. Und kriegen vielleicht manchmal sogar Sonderwünsche oder so was. Mein Papa hat mal einen Unfall gebaut, so einen kleinen. Und dann war er auf dem Polizeiamt und da musste er seinen Pass zeigen. Und dann: „Oh Gott, der ist Deutscher" und so. [...] Und in Deutschland kommt „ching chang chong" und so was.*

Charlie's account clearly shows how migration experiences are deeply influenced by the larger geometries of power and the prevailing stereotypes in the mainstream "host" society.

Sixteen-year-old Don, from the German school, openly addresses his frustration about the different treatment of foreigners in China. Because he looks Chinese, Don often experiences differences in the way Chinese "locals" view him in contrast to his white friends, who are immediately identifiable as foreigners:

> DON: *You get treated differently, as if you were… […] Well, last year and the year before, I always hung out with German friends, so to speak. They all look, well, tall-built and western. And when you walk through the streets with them, and when we get in trouble, then it's most often the Chinese who get dissed first. As a Chinese, if you look Chinese, you generally get less respect from the Chinese. They respect foreigners to the max.*[45]

In summary, expatriate students feel they have a "special status in Shanghai" and are often treated differently from Chinese citizens. Some of the students' descriptions can even be labeled as cases of positive discrimination. This is particularly true for those who are identifiable as foreign at first sight. Many of the students echo Don's above account of the Chinese citizens' "respect" for foreigners, and for white people in particular. The next section further explores the role of the expatriate students' physical differences from or similarities to the Chinese, and how either affects their experience in Shanghai. While it further elaborates upon the privileged status of whiteness, it also examines the white high school students' experiences of "not fitting in," as well as the constant gaze of the "other."

4.2 "We don't fit in:" The gaze of the "other"

"Being a migrant is, amongst other things, a profoundly bodily experience" (Fechter 2007b, 60). Consequently, for many expatriate students, the difference between their bodies and those of the Chinese—namely their "whiteness"—plays a crucial role. Whiteness has recently come into focus among scholars, who explore the cultural construction of whiteness and challenge it as an unexamined and unmarked category (Hill 1997). Whiteness as examined in these studies, is summarized by Donald (2000,

45 German original: DON: *Man wird auch anders behandelt als, wenn man. […] Also letztes und vorletztes Jahr. Ich bin ja immer mit, ehm, deutschen Freunden, so zu sagen. Die sehen halt alle, also groß gebaut und westlich aus. Und wenn man mit denen halt durch die Straßen läuft, und wenn da, wenn wir dann Stress bekommen, dann ist meistens der Chinese derjenige der als erstes angemacht wird. Als Chinese, wenn du aussiehst wie ein Chinese, hast du hier generell weniger Respekt von Chinesen. Die respektieren Ausländer ja aufs Übelste.*

157) who in turn draws on Richard Dyer's *White* ([1997] 2008), as "a racial category; generally understood as a construction of privilege in many political, social, and economic environments." Whiteness is not only seen as a bodily difference in regard to skin color, but the perceived difference also includes height, overall stature, hair texture, or eye shape. "White" therefore does not stand for skin color alone, but for an intricate web of aspects, as Dyer highlights:

> A person is deemed quite visibly white because of a quite complicated interaction of elements, of which flesh tones within the pink to beige range are only one: the shape of nose, eyes and lips, the colour and set of hair, even body shape may all be mobilised to determine someone's "colour." For instance, it has been customary in the West to call the complexion of Chinese or Japanese people yellow, yet it is by no means clear that their complexions are so distinct from that of white Westerners; it is generally the shape of the eyes that is critical in deciding whether someone is "white" or "yellow" (Dyer [1997] 2008, 42).

The expatriate students observed that, in China, being white often means receiving preferential treatment, because in many cases it is synonymous with spending power. While the perceptions of racial superiority among expatriate youths in Shanghai are not as extreme as the accounts collected by Jacqueline Knörr (2005, 60–64) of white expatriate youths in Africa,[46] it seems nonetheless clear, that whiteness is highly regarded in China.[47] M. Dujon Johnson (2011), who researched racism in Taiwan and Mainland China, sums up his encounters:

> The line of reasoning of white racial superiority (that the most advanced societies are predominantly white), exists today in most segments of Chinese culture and the result is that mainstream soci-

46 Jaqueline Knörr (2005), in writing about experiences of (re)migration of expatriate youths from Africa to Germany, reflects upon the effects that the experience of whiteness can have for children. She describes the link between whiteness and superiority as follows:

> The message the majority of white children growing up in "black" Africa get is that being white goes along with being rich and superior. While blacks may also (be)come rich and advance economically for different reasons, being rich appears to be an innate and natural feature of being white, a feature of social class, which in most cases goes along with a feeling of cultural superiority. Whereas white parents in most cases have experienced that being white does not have such implications everywhere, many white children lack this experience altogether—and many of their parents prefer forgetting it while in Africa (Knörr 2005, 61).

47 For a historical account of constructions of race in China, see Frank Dikötter (1992), *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*. For a contemporary approach and more personal account, see *Race & Racism in the Chinas*, by African-American author M. Dujon Johnson (2011).

> ety associates wealth, status, education and power in the west with individuals of visible and identifiable Caucasian origins (skin pigmentation) (Johnson 2011, 43).

The students' feelings of being ascribed a "special status" in Shanghai are based, as Johnson's findings suggest, on the tight link between whiteness and "wealth, status, education and power."[48]

Keeping the privileged status that is attached to being white in mind, this "special status" as the students themselves label it, also means that blending in is impossible. The expatriate youths' "exotic" appearance—as student Antonia once put it—provokes curiosity and stares from local citizens. Sixteen-year-old Karina remembers this experience vividly:

> KARINA: *When two friends of mine visited Shanghai, we were always out. We went downtown every day. I think thousands of Chinese took pictures of us, or filmed us. It's probably simply this curiosity. Because they have never seen foreigners. Especially small children. They just walk up to you and always say "Hello." <L>. And are always extremely nice and really cute somehow.*[49]

German student Lara has similar stories to tell:

> LARA: *I can't even count the times I have been filmed or photographed in the metro anymore. Because they think I come from the moon or something. Because blond is not the color here. Especially if you go out. I mean you have to know that. You get stared at. [...] In the beginning, I thought it was funny. Meanwhile, I think it is a bit annoying.*[50]

Their whiteness attracts attention when they move through the city. While some students can accept the curiosity, others feel unsettled by the "gaze of the Other" (Fechter 2007b, 62) and complain that they find such treat-

---

48 Fechter and Walsh, however, remind us that there is a class hierarchy within the category of "western expatriates" and further argue that this diversity in class "also challenges us to think about whiteness as negotiative, not as a racialised position that automatically awards a high status within the globalising city" (Fechter and Walsh 2010, 1200).

49 German original: KARINA: *Als jetzt zwei Freundinnen von mir in Shanghai hier waren, waren wir immer unterwegs. Jeden Tag in der Stadt. Wir wurden glaube ich von Tausenden von Chinesen fotografiert, aufgenommen. Das ist einfach wirklich diese Neugier womöglich. Weil sie einfach noch nie Ausländer gesehen haben. Vor allem Kleinkinder. Die kommen dann zu einem hin und sagen immer so „Hello" <L> und sind immer total freundlich und voll süß irgendwie.*

50 German original: LARA: *So oft wie ich schon gefilmt wurde in der Metro und fotografiert und sonst was. Kann ich gar nicht mehr zählen. Weil die denken ich komme vom Mond oder so. Weil blond ist hier ja eh schon hier nicht die Farbe. <L> Vor allem wenn man abends weg ist. Ich meine, das musst du ja auch wissen. Man wird so angestarrt. [...] Am Anfang fand ich es lustig. Mittlerweile finde ich es ein bisschen nervig.*

ment unnerving. My own reactions to attracting stares depended on the context and my mood. Re-reading my field diary from 2007, when I had commented more frequently on being the object of the gaze than during my stays between 2010 and 2012, my own desire to be able to blend in, to not be immediately visible as a "stranger" is apparent. This experience relates to Stephanie Donald's point that we are unaware of our white ethnicity due to the perceived normality and status it often brings along: "The bearers of whiteness so often pretend to neutrality. We refuse our ethnicity, while playing on its potential for advantage in the main streams of money, power and political clout" (Donald 2000, 157).

This becoming visible as "white," which I often found disturbing, can be understood in the context of Richard Dyer's argument, that "Whites must be seen to be white, yet whiteness as race resides in invisible properties and whiteness as power is maintained by being unseen. To be seen as white is to have one's corporeality registered, yet true whiteness resides in the non-corporeal" (Dyer [1997] 2008, 45).

Dyer's description of losing power through being registered as white and becoming aware of one's corporeality explains my and the teenagers' feeling unsettled by the locals' stares. In a manner similar to my early experiences, Britta, who is Norwegian, describes how it can be difficult to deal with not blending in:

> BRITTA: *Also people staring, not being shy at all. Just like in the metro and stuff. [...] And we are like, yeah I know I look like, weird. I know. We just feel like, so, I don't know, just trying staring back and they are still like staring at [you]. [...] There were like many weird things about coming here. [...] They laugh and smile and [touch] your hair.*

Britta describes her discomfort and how she attempts to defend herself by "staring back," a strategy that proves unsuccessful.

In addition to the sudden awareness of corporeality, my ethnographic material on expatriate women gathered in 2007, and an article by Willis and Yeoh (2008) on single British migrants, provide evidence that white women experience feelings of unattractiveness in China. According to Willis and Yeoh, the phrase "Bridget Jones in China" was commonly reported to be a term by which women referred to themselves. Some, for example, reported Chinese people commenting on their "fat arms" (Willis and Yeoh 2008). As Katie Walsh (2008) observed among expatriate women in Dubai, increased physical activity—such as taking fitness courses on the compound—and beauty treatments such as manicures, pedicures, and facials are also very common among adult white women in Shanghai. The adult female interviewees I worked with in 2007 also reported feeling large and ungainly when talking about the difficulties they had finding clothes that fit.

While some of my female teenage informants share this experience, they—in contrast to the adult women—do not seem to feel that their

attractiveness is questioned. Nevertheless, buying clothes in China heightens their experience of "being different" and literally not fitting in:

LARA: *Shopping is an issue. You have to find your shopping area. H&M and such things, that's what I prefer.*
KARINA: *Yes. C&A.*
LARA: *These Chinese shops, I don't even enter them.*
KARINA: *No. The fashion. Chinese fashion isn't really ...*
LARA: *Doesn't fit us. I must say I don't fit into the pants. The tops don't fit. They are too tight at the bust.*[51]

These experiences of physical difference play an important role in the migration process. Evidently, these white youths' experiences of Shanghai are significantly affected by the stares and other reactions they receive from Shanghai's Chinese citizens. To some extent, such reactions may, by highlighting the importance of whiteness, reaffirm the impact white skin still has. However, the stares can also be unsetteling and thus curb the power usually attributed to whiteness; their physical difference becomes a state which the teenage expats cannot escape, because blending in is impossible. A thorough discussion of the intricate issue of race and racism in Shanghai, however, is beyond the scope of this study and would require research on and input from the Chinese perspective. In my fieldwork, however, I focused on the subjective experiences among expatriate youths and merely aim to point out how their physical appearance influences their practices in Shanghai.

The students' discomfort at constantly being seen as different and their suddenly hightened awareness of their skin color might be a significant reason why they seek out spaces they claim as "expatriate," which, in turn, leads to further boundary drawing. Eighteen-year-old Peter, for example, explains how he feels exhausted and estranged in the urban environment due not just to the language barrier, but to the impossibility of blending in:

PETER: *I am annoyed. Well, I am not annoyed by it, but life is very exhausting here. Well, in part it is really exhausting. Because of all the traffic, all the people here. And that is inevitable. And the problem is also that I haven't mastered the language at all. And I don't like that. First of all, everyone looks at you. That might be normal. You look different from them and many others in their environment.*[52]

---

51 German original: LARA: *Also, Shoppen ist so ein Ding. Man muss ja eigentlich seine Shopping Area finden. H&M, solche Sachen. Da tendiere ich hin.* KARINA: *Ja, C&A.* LARA: *Also, diese chinesischen Läden, da gehe ich gar nicht erst rein.* KARINA: *Nee. Die Mode. Chinesiche Mode ist nicht so, unbedingt.* LARA: *Passt uns auch gar nicht. Ich muss sagen, ich pass in die Hosen nicht rein. Mir passen die Oberteile nicht. Die Oberweite ist zu eng.*

52 German original: PETER: *Mich regt auf. Also mich regt es nicht auf, aber, die, es ist sehr anstrengend hier auch das Leben. Also teils ist es sehr anstrengend hier. Durch den ganzen Verkehr, durch die ganzen Menschen hier. Und das lässt sich auch nicht*

Peter's remark that "life is very exhausting here" stands in stark contrast to the comfort of expatriate life that students usually describe. However, Peter's account delineates expatriate life from what lies outside the "bubble" and, at the same time, points to the factors that contribute to its creation and maintenance, as well as the expats' withdrawal into it. Britta also explains her encounter with this phenomenon:

> BRITTA: *Also it is nice when you go to places where you see other western people. Like, you don't feel like the only one who is blond in the whole building. You can, like, look around and see, maybe they are American or German.*

The experience of being white therefore clearly shapes the ways expatriates create and define spaces for themselves. The physical walls that protect the gated communities or international schools and the boundaries around the body—namely, cultural constructions of whiteness—often support each other. Fechter has identified similar experiences among expatriates in Indonesia (2007b, 59–82), and also notes that

> their movements through public space similarly reflect and shape their experiences of, and attitudes towards "Indonesia." In particular, many expatriates feel rather uncomfortable being looked at by Indonesians, and their wish to avoid this "gaze of the Other" therefore informs many of their spatial practices (ibid., 67).

Thus not only their own view of the city, but also the process of *being viewed,* shapes the ways expatriates respond to these urban landscapes and might be one of their many motives behind avoiding certain spaces—such as the subway—and embracing others, such as nightclubs or bars.

Fechter and Walsh (2010, 1204) emphasize, while drawing from Bonnett (2004), that the usage of "western" for white "may be true in both the imaginations of expatriates and those they come into contact with." However, while expatriates are usually imagined as "western" and "white"—these terms are often used interchangeably—not all expatriates fit into these catergories. Many expatriates in Shanghai are not "western" at all and may come from other parts of Asia (as was the case for the majority of the students at the Singaporean school I visited). Furthermore, a considerable number of the expatriate students who consider themselves "western," such as those who come from Germany, are not white. While I only interviewed one black girl at the Singaporean school and did not accompany any black expatriate students in Shanghai, I met many students of Asian

vermeiden. Und das Problem ist auch, dass [ich] die Sprache einfach überhaupt nicht beherrsche. Und ich mag das nicht. Erstens gucken einen alle an. Das ist ja vielleicht auch selbstverständlich. Man sieht anders aus als sie selbst und viele andere in ihrer Umgebung.

descent who had a Chinese parent or grandparents who had migrated to Europe or North America from Hong Kong, Mainland China, or other parts of Asia decades before the student’s family relocated to Shanghai. These children form a large percentage of the students at all of the international schools and their experiences in Shanghai differ substantially from those of their peers who are perceived as “white.”

While Don, born to Chinese parents in Germany, for instance, voices his anger about being treated differently by the guards at the gated communities (see Part III, Chapter 2), other students with a more Chinese appearance stress that their ability to blend in is positive. French school student Arnaud, for instance, describes his freedom to play with being an expat or not:

ARNAUD: *Sometimes you want to, like. I don’t know how to say this.*
INTERVIEWER: *En français?*
ARNAUD: *Je fondre dans la masse.*
INTERVIEWER: *Okay. Like, you go with the flow, no, you hide in the masses.*
ARNAUD: *Yeah yeah. You hide in the masses. Exactly. When you see some kind of French guy, you don’t want to see. And you pretend you are friends with the Chinese guy.*
INTERVIEWER: *<L>*
ARNAUD: *And then you just go, and he doesn’t see that. That is pretty cool, I mean I like the way to deal with this. Yeah.*

However, having the outward ability to fit in does not mean that these teenagers feel they are part of Shanghai’s society. Charlie, for instance, states that she still feels like a tourist:

CHARLIE: *I got used to the environment. But sometimes, out on the street, when there are a lot of people, then I feel that I am not a part of it. What is strange is that when I am in the city, I almost feel like a tourist sometimes.*[53]

Although the ways students experience physical differences encourages them to seek out spaces frequented by foreigners, the accounts of the self-ascribed “Chinese looking” expatriates demonstrate that this aspect alone is inadequate for explaining the local-expat divide. To further investigate this “diaspora space,” the entangled relations between expatriates and Shanghai’s citizens, I return to the expatriate students’ contemplations on other barriers which prevent them from forming balanced relationships with local youths.

53 German original: CHARLIE: Also an die Umgebung habe ich mich gewöhnt schon. Aber ich finde es halt manchmal auf der Straße so. Wenn dann, da sind halt ganz viele Leute. Also ich fühle, dass ich nicht dazugehöre. […] Das Komische ist, wenn ich in der Stadt bin, fühl ich mich fast manchmal wie ein Tourist.

4.3 Barriers to "integration," or, the difficulties of making "Chinese" friends

In 1969, in his influential edited volume *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* Fredrik Barth ([1969] 1998) proposed that boundaries and barriers between groups are worth close examination because it is "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth [1969] 1998, 15). While this might seem like an overemphasis on the role of barriers, I believe that perceptions and practices surrounding boundary drawing should be investigated not least because this is a focus that has also been promoted in the realm of transcultural studies. As I have put forth in the Introduction, constant negotiation between creating boundaries and crossing them takes place in culturally-entangled environments. To explore new surroundings and unknown practices does not necessarily erase but may even provoke the desire to create distinct spaces of familiarity. Therefore, drawing on both Nadig (2004) and Pütz (2004), and their ideas of transculturality in progress and as practice, I highlighted the relevance of the processes and practices of drawing cultural boundaries to our understanding of transcultural relations. Consequently, this subchapter explores the students' articulations and perceptions of boundaries within the "diaspora space" that hinder encounters between expatriate and "local" youths.

When I introduce the term "integration" during several interviews, it promptly triggers contemplation about what "integration" might mean, and students often aim to apply the idea to their own social worlds in Shanghai. At the same time, these discussions implicitly show how the youths perceive such borders, as seventeen-year-old Karina's definition of "integration" demonstrates:

> KARINA: *Integration, I would say, is when you move into a foreign country, China for instance. Then I would integrate, in the sense that I, for example, just learn the language. Or I should maybe also study their culture. That I adapt myself a little to them. Not only do my own thing, my own culture, so to say, again. That I maybe show interest in their culture. That I start trying Chinese food. That I behave like a Chinese. <L> That I tune to the same wavelength, so to say. I believe the language is very important.*[54]

---

54 German original: KARINA: Also, Integration, würde ich sagen, wenn ich in irgendein fremdes Land ziehe, zum Beispiel China. Dann würde ich mich integrieren, in dem Sinne von, dass ich einfach zum Beispiel die Sprache lerne. Oder. Ich soll deren Kultur vielleicht lernen. Also, dass ich mich ein bisschen nach ihnen richte. Also nicht immer so mein Ding durchziehe. Also, sozusagen meine Kultur wieder, dass ich mich vielleicht auch für ihre etwas interessiere. Dass ich anfange auch das chinesische Essen irgendwie zu probieren. Dass ich mich sozusagen benehme wie so ein Chinese. <L> Also mich auf deren Wellenlänge bewege sozusagen. Die Sprache finde ich ist sehr wichtig.

Karina defined "integration" by applying it to her own situation in China and seeing it as the efforts she should make, such as learning the language and becoming familiar with Chinese culture, food, and behavioral practices. Taking up the four perceived barriers that Karina names—language, culture, food, and behavior—this section illustrates how expatriate youths experience these categories as areas for potential insight.

All the international schools currently offer Chinese language courses and the majority of students try learning Chinese at some point during their stay in Shanghai. While some students keep studying Chinese, many find it too challenging and abandon their efforts. Some students who have a native Chinese parent already have language proficiency, but the differences in dialect can make it difficult even for them to understand Shanghainese citizens. Furthermore, all of the parents of Chinese descent have a good command of the language spoken at their children's school. Charlie, for example, describes how her parents occasionally talk to her and her sister in Chinese, but that the two usually answer in German. Don, who speaks a Chinese dialect with his parents, judges his Chinese as "not so good" and considers learning Chinese extremely difficult for foreigners in general:

> DON: *And I also believe that foreigners, as such, that they cannot really achieve it, to learn Chinese. Well, I myself had problems. In the beginning, I really studied a lot, Chinese. Nothing stays. It's really—you have to study every day. Every day. And no foreigner here at the school does that.*[55]

While many of the students at the German school actually enroll in the Chinese language classes the school offers as part of their curriculum, the time most students spend studying, as Don points out, is not sufficient to achieve a good conversational level or the ability to read Chinese characters adequately. Then again, other students who are proficient in Chinese demonstrate that language skills—though helpful—do not necessarily enable friendships across the local-expat divide.

> ANTONIA: *I can speak fluently, but I nonetheless don't have any Chinese friends. When I think about it, that isn't normal, usually, living in a foreign country and not knowing the people in that country. [...] It is even stranger if you, for instance, take [student's name]. He has been living in Shanghai for eleven years now. In China. And doesn't know a word, hardly any Chinese. He could live here perfectly for eleven years without speaking*

55 German original: DON: *Und ich glaub auch, dass Ausländer an sich, dass die das nicht wirklich schaffen können. Chinesisch zu lernen. Also ich selber hatte Probleme. So am Anfang hab ich ja richtig viel gelernt. Chinesisch. Es bleibt nichts mehr hängen. Es ist echt. Du musst jeden Tag lernen. Jeden Tag. Und kein Ausländer hier in der Schule macht das hier.*

> *Chinese. That shows how little we are integrated. You don't have to know Chinese. We are a group of our own where you get by with German. Actually, I should talk to Chinese people more often, when I think about it. It is really strange how few Chinese friends I have. That is, none.*[56]

Antonia thinks that the extrinsic motivation to learn Chinese is, for some students, very low because they can manage their daily lives successfully without having any Chinese language skills. Antonia's lack of Chinese friends, on the other hand, cannot be attributed to an inability to communicate. As she sees it, making friends with Chinese locals would require more effort on her part.

Paul, though he does not know any Chinese, also believes that there is a barrier beyond mere language:

> PAUL: *[...] We can't talk to those people.*
> INTERVIEWER: *Do you think it is the language barrier that makes it difficult to interact?*
> PAUL: *A bit. Also, it is the whole culture thing.*
> INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.*
> PAUL: *Unless you grow up here, it's hard to have, like, Chinese friends.*

Paul readily labels the barrier hindering him from having Chinese friends as "the whole culture thing" but leaves his belief unexplained. Norwegian student Britta's description of her initial encounters with a Chinese family touches upon this issue as well, showing how this cultural barrier can be understood as consisting of unknown practices, for instance eating habits.

> BRITTA: *I like it so much more when I have western friends, or like, I don't know, like international friends. Then they can just take me [along] and you don't have to figure out the stuff. [...] In the beginning, we were with this Chinese family, and they just took us to these really hardcore Chinese food places and we are like, how can we eat this? We are not used to this. And can't even use chopsticks. So I am, like, glad that I find similar things to home then.*

---

56 German original: ANTONIA: *Aber ich kann ja fließend sprechen und so und ich hab trotzdem keine chinesischen Freunde. Wenn ich drüber nachdenke ist das eigentlich nicht normal. Wenn man im Normalfall in einem andren Land lebt. Und die Leute in dem Land nicht kennt. [...] Noch komischer ist zum Beispiel [Name eines Schülers], wohnt elf Jahre in Shanghai. In China. Und kann kein Wort, kaum. Chinesisch. Der konnte hier elf Jahre perfekt leben ohne Chinesisch zu können. Also das zeigt wie wenig integriert wir sind. Man muss kein Chinesisch können. Wir sind eine Gruppe für sich wo man mit Deutsch komplett durchkommt. Eigentlich sollte ich mich mal mehr mit Chinesen unterhalten, wenn ich drüber nachdenke. Das ist echt komisch wie wenig chinesische Freunde ich habe. Nämlich gar keine.*

Britta apparently experiences the need to "figure out the stuff" in order to cross the local-expat divide as stressful, uncomfortable, and perhaps even frightening. She thus actively seeks out the company of, in her words, "international friends." These statements illustrate that the international high school students actively participate in the boundary-drawing of the expatriate communities. However, Britta's quote also shows that the demarcation gives expatriate teenagers, who constantly move, a sense of continuity through finding "similar things to home." The tentative exploration of Shanghai's environment, coping with the emotional strain of moving, and integration into the expatriate community are among the many experiences expatriate teenagers are forced to contend with (See Parts II and III.)

Sixteen-year-old Charlie, whose parents grew up in China, says that having a different daily routine is another explanation for her difficulty making Chinese friends:

> CHARLIE: *I think you can fit in; especially if you speak the language. But it is difficult. I can't speak from my own experience, but my friend [who is the child of Chinese parents, born in Germany, at the German school], for instance, has Chinese friends. And she also notes every time, that there is a difference. And that they mostly have no time because of school. Because they always have to study. And that they think differently. It's a little different.*[57]

Charlie thinks that the separation of international and Chinese schools and the extremely time-consuming Chinese schooling renders friendships to local Chinese students difficult for her. Based on her friend's accounts, she also assumes that they "think differently."

While the statements above, which I related to the four barriers stemming from Karina's interpretation of "integration," mostly revolve around differences, some students also reflect upon the lack of opportunities—and effort made—to get to know Chinese youths.

> ANTONIA: *But I had a Chinese friend. The daughter of my mom's friend. We were always close friends. And then, in fifth or sixth grade, her school got really tough. And then we couldn't see each other anymore. And since then we are hardly in touch anymore. That is a little difficult with the people here, because they have so much school. But still, when we go out for example, I like to*

---

57 German original: CHARLIE: *Also ich glaube man kann sich schon integrieren. Also besonders wenn man die Sprache spricht, kann man das. Aber es ist schwer weil. Also man kann, also ich kann jetzt nicht so viel aus eigener Erfahrung sprechen. Meine Freundin zum Beispiel, die hat ja auch chinesische Freundinnen. Und sie merkt halt auch jedes Mal, dass es anders ist. Und dass die auch meistens keine Zeit haben wegen der Schule. Weil sie immer lernen müssen. Und dass sie halt auch ganz anders denken und so. Ist schon ein bisschen anders.*

> *talk to the Chinese. They are mostly university students, because then they have time to party. And then I feel accepted. But I still feel like a foreigner at the same time. Because they see me as a foreigner.*[58]

Antonia's statement again reveals the differences in school systems as a key factor in impeding friendships with "local" students. She also points out that, the older students are, the greater this divide becomes. My own observations confirm that (especially for teenagers) there is very little overlap in the everyday spaces of expatriate and Chinese youths. Additionally, even those spaces that are less demarcated—namely, nightlife spaces (Part IV, Chapter 2) and the shop (Part IV, Chapter 3)—present few possibilities for meeting Chinese students their age.

In addition to drawing (spatial) barriers to create comfort zones, language difficulties, differences in practices surrounding food and education, and the lack of places to meet Chinese youths, some expatriate teenagers also perceive the Chinese state and its citizens as active agents in keeping foreigners "foreign."

4.4 Youths' perceptions of local attitudes towards foreigners

Some students also voiced a feeling that China, or Shanghai's citizens, reject or limit non-Chinese people from being part of their society. In this section, and keeping the expatriates' practices of demarcation in mind, I present three teenage girls' perceptions of exclusion. Two perspectives, those of white girls Andrea and Karina, convey their feelings on the local-expat divide, as well as the state's policies and its treatment of foreigners. The third perspective is that of Antonia, whose parents are German and Chinese. She reflects on her status in Chinese society and describes how Chinese people constantly ascribe the status of "foreigner" to her. It shows that her idea of urban citizenship, her claim to be Shanghainese as a way of taking a transcultural perspective (as I discussed in Part I, Chapter 4.1) can be difficult to pursue.

Sixteen-year-old Andrea, who moved with her family to a Chinese complex downtown, feels she could never truly be a part of Chinese society:

---

58 German original: ANTONIA: *Aber ich hatte eine chinesische Freundin. Auch die Tochter von einer Freundin meiner Mama. Und mit der war ich immer sehr gut befreundet. Und dann fing sie an, ehm, so in der Fünften, Sechsten wurde bei ihr die Schule richtig hart. Und dann konnten wir uns gar nicht mehr treffen. Und seitdem haben wir kaum noch Kontakt. Das ist halt ein bisschen schwer hier mit den Leuten, weil die einfach so viel Schule haben. Aber. Zum Beispiel jetzt beim Feiern, ich rede dann auch gern mit Chinesen. Meistens sind es dann Studenten, weil die haben dann ja Zeit zum Feiern. Und so. Und dann fühl ich mich schon angenommen. Aber ich fühl mich gleichzeitig auch ein bisschen als Ausländerin. Weil die mich als Ausländerin sehen.*

ANDREA: *On an emotional level, I'd say that we are not really, well, we are not a part of it. [...] The Chinese also call us foreigners. That's what we are. I don't think we will ever, I don't know. Well, I don't have the feeling that they allow us in entirely. We have our special [status], we are treated differently. I notice.*[59]

Andrea ties this emotional perception of being an outsider to questions of Chinese politics:

ANDREA: *The state doesn't permit it. I don't think I would be allowed to attend a Chinese school. With my views, politically. I think I wouldn't be allowed to. That's why. That might actually be an example of us not being integrated.*[60]

While Andrea's assumption is not entirely true, research by Anna Greenspan (Greenspan 2008a; 2008b; 2011b; 2011a) demonstrates the extreme difficulties expatriates face when choosing local schools. Greenspan's research comments on the differences between Chinese and "Western" education, a debate that gained prominence not only in the USA, but also in Germany, after the publication of Amy Chua's *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (2011). In her blogs and writings, Greenspan discusses cases of western families who chose the Chinese education system for their children. Investigating parents' and children's challenges in adjusting to the different school system, Greenspan shows that enrollment at local schools in Shanghai is possible, but only if parents and children possess the necessary language skills and persistence. One mother interviewed by Greenspan describes the difficulties her family experienced when attempting to enroll her children in a Chinese school:

> My husband literally banged on gates to get us in. He went to probably ten [schools]. He would bang on the gates and say: "I want to come here" and they would answer "*laowai*,[61] why are you here? Go away." He had to go back a few times. Eventually we ended up near Loushanguan Lu ditie zhan—that was the only one we could get into (Greenspan 2011b).[62]

---

59 German original: ANDREA: *So auf einer emotionalen Ebene würde ich sagen, dass wir hier jetzt nicht so. Also wir sind kein Teil. [...] Die Chinesen nennen uns ja auch die Ausländer. Wir sind es ja auch. Ich glaube wir werden nie. Also, ich weiß nicht. Also ich habe nicht das Gefühl, dass wir komplett reingelassen werden. Wir haben da schon unsere Sonder-, wir werden schon anders behandelt.*

60 German original: ANDREA: *Der Staat lässt es ja auch nicht zu. Ich glaube nicht, dass ich jetzt auf eine chinesische Schule gehen dürfte. Mit meinen Ansichten, politischen, also. Ich glaube das dürfte ich nicht. Deswegen. Es ist ja eigentlich ein Beispiel dafür, dass wir nicht integriert werden.*

61 A colloquial term meaning "foreigner."

62 *That's Shanghai* magazine, "Local experiences: Anna Greenspan interviews Emily Meyer on her experiences with the local education system." Last modified April

The extraordinary efforts foreigners have to make to send their children to a local Chinese school become apparent in Greenspan's interviews. During a joint talk with James Farrer at a workshop organized by Heidelberg University's Cluster of Excellence: "Asia and Europe in a Global Context,"[63] Greenspan discussed the cases of a few parents and children who chose this option. She found that teachers continuously ascribed "foreign" status to foreign children, i.e. using them to shame other students who performed worse in class than the foreigners did. Many western parents, Greenspan argued, also felt uneasy about the political education their children received, which conflicted too strongly with their own values.

It is the political and legal situation in China that high school student Karina feels most affects her experience of Shanghai.

KARINA: *Here, in China, I feel safer. Because it is more strict. Here they still have the death penalty. That maybe warns the people off a little. Erm, but concerning the police, I always sidestep them. I don't know. I am afraid of them, I fear them somehow. That is different in Prague. Because it is so dangerous there. I don't know. There I always feel safer close to the police. […] Here I avoid them. I don't know why. Somehow.*

INTERVIEWER: *That's just how you feel?*

KARINA: *How I feel. Because I know how it works here. As a foreigner, you usually get the short end of the stick when you do something. Especially here. One of my father's co-workers had an accident. He went to prison, although it wasn't even his fault. The Chinese, they all stuck together. They arranged something, discussed it, and then jumped on him and told him "It is your fault." And then, of course, the police were against him. […]*

INTERVIEWER: *So, on the one, hand you feel safe—*

KARINA: *But on the other hand <L>*

INTERVIEWER: *On the other hand, the security forces are suspect to you.*

KARINA: *Yes. It's extreme. Especially if you know how it works here. The death penalty? That is also quite extreme. They still get shot in prison here. When I look at Ai Weiwei;*[64]

21st 2011, accessed April 10th, 2012. http://www.thatsmags.com/shanghai/article/368/local-experiences.

63 James Farrer and Anna Greenspan: "Raising Cosmopolitans: Expatriate Families Navigating Shanghai's Local Schools." The workshop "Growing up and Growing Old in Shanghai, Delhi, and Tokyo. Inter-generational Stories from Asia's Global Cities" was organized by the Cluster of Excellence: "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" of Heidelberg University, Germany, and held in Shanghai from September 7th to September 10th, 2011. Their work differs from mine as they look at the minority of foreign passport holders whose children are enrolled at Chinese local schools. Moreover, the work is mainly based on the parents' perspectives.

64 Ai Weiwei, a Chinese artist and activist, was arrested in Beijing in 2011 and held by officials for 81 days without any charges being filed against him.

he disappeared without a trace. Nobody knew where he was.[65]

While other students feel that Chinese law does not apply to them—as we saw, they find buying drugs easy and the police not at all intimidating—Karina clearly fears the Chinese judicial system. Her account of the police also differs from Charlie's account of her father's preferential treatment due to his German passport. Experiences, therefore, differ greatly. Karina's family is originally from the Czech Republic, where her relatives experienced the Prague Spring, in 1968. Her family's memories of this era, which they likely communicated to Karina, undoubtedly contribute to her fear of arbitrary state power and her perception of the Chinese state as being hostile toward foreigners.

Her classmate Antonia, one of the few students who actually claims to be Shanghainese, has a different view on China that focuses less on the role of the state and more upon the diversity of its citizens:

ANTONIA: *I feel accepted in my society. But I wouldn't say that I am part of Chinese society. Sometimes, in parts. Through my mom [who is Shanghainese]. But that is those who studied together with her. That is a different society than, erm, those whom you see every day. [...] More educated. Not affluent, necessarily, but highly educated. My mom and her engineering students.*[66]

Antonia makes it clear that, for her, "Chinese society"—as I named it during the interview to see what kind of response the term would provoke—is

65 German original: KARINA: *Hier in China fühl ich mich sicherer. Weil das auch strenger ist einfach. Hier gilt auch noch die Todesstrafe. Das schreckt die Leute vielleicht auch noch ein bisschen ab. Ehm, aber was jetzt die Polizei angeht, da mache ich immer einen großen Bogen drum. Ich weiß nicht. Vor denen hab ich, vor denen fürchte ich mich irgendwie. Das ist in Prag wieder anders. Weil es dort nämlich so gefährlich ist. Ich weiß nicht, da fühl ich mich bei der Polizei immer sicherer. [...] Hier mache ich einen großen Bogen drum herum. Ich weiß nicht warum. Irgendwie.* INTERVIEWER: *Vom Gefühl her einfach?* KARINA: *Vom Gefühl her, weil, ich weiß einfach wie es hier läuft. Als Ausländer hat man hier meistens eh die Arschkarte wenn man was macht. Vor allem. Hier, ein Mitarbeiter von meinem Vater, der hat einen Unfall gebaut. Der ist in den Knast gewandert, obwohl es noch nicht mal sein Fehler war. Die Chinesen, die haben sich alle zusammen getan. Haben irgendwas abgemacht, besprochen und sind dann auf ihn losgegangen. Und haben ihm gesagt: "Das ist deine Schuld." Und die Polizei war dann natürlich auch gegen ihn. [...]* INTERVIEWER: *Also, einerseits fühlst du dich sicher ...* KARINA: *Aber auf der anderen Seite <L>* INTERVIEWER: *aber andererseits sind die Sicherheitskräfte dir suspekt.* KARINA: *Ja, das ist heftig. Wenn man weiß wie das hier vor sich läuft, vor allem. Todesstrafe? Das ist auch ziemlich heftig. Die werden hier immer noch erschossen im Knast. Wenn ich mir jetzt Ai Weiwei angucke. Der ist spurlos verschwunden. Niemand wusste wo er ist.*

66 German original: ANTONIA: *Also ich fühl mich in meiner Gesellschaft angenommen. Aber ich würd nicht sagen, dass ich so in der chinesischen Gesellschaft bin. Ehm. Manchmal schon. Teilweise. Durch meine Mama. Aber das sind auch alle die, die mit ihr studiert haben. Das ist noch einmal eine andere Gesellschaft als die, die, eh, man so jeden Tag sieht. [...] Gebildetere. Wohlhabend nicht unbedingt, aber es ist eine sehr gebildete Schicht. Meine Mama und die ganzen Maschinenbaustudenten halt.*

a diverse group. She explains how education, or even education abroad, plays a large role in how Shanghai's citizens perceive foreigners. She further clarifies her own position in Shanghai:

ANTONIA: *It's not that I am being excluded or anything. But, you're not really a part of Chinese society.*
INTERVIEWER: *Yes. I don't know. If you'd use, for example, the term integration…*
ANTONIA: *No, the people are not being integrated here. If, for example in Germany, foreigners come, then normally many of them stay, as does the next generation, and so on. And then they should integrate themselves. Start speaking German and so on. But here, the foreigners learn Chinese to be able to communicate a bit. But they will always stay foreigners. They don't integrate. And this is due to them leaving again soon. And because here you simply get by being a foreigner. Probably, even precisely because you are German. You are here at a German company. That is not really integration.*[67]

Antonia, whose experience can be placed in the context of long-term settler narratives, emphasizes her distance from "typical expats." Farrer (2010) examines the narratives of emplaced foreigners, such as Antonia and her family, who have been living in Shanghai for more than five years. His interviewees differed from expatriates who were only in Shanghai for a temporary assignment, as they had made a conscious decision to stay there. Farrer (ibid., 2) argues that the different narratives of these long-term settlers serve as "claims to cosmopolitan urban citizenship in the emerging global city." He explains:

> These narrative typologies show that Western expatriate narratives of emplacement cannot be reduced to a single postcolonial temporality, though postcolonial imaginaries remain a useful expression of simultaneous belonging and dislocation in the twenty-first-century Asian global city. Long-term foreign settlers mix narratives that situate them in multiple temporalities—postcolonial, post-socialist and post-modern—each implying a different fragile possibility of urban

67 German original: ANTONIA: *Nicht dass ich ausgeschlossen werde oder so. Aber, man ist nicht wirklich ein Teil der chinesischen Gesellschaft.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja. Ich weiß nicht. Wenn man jetzt zum Beispiel den Begriff Integration benutzen würde, so.* ANTONIA: *Nee, die Leute werden hier nicht integriert. Wenn in Deutschland zum Beispiel Ausländer kommen, dann bleiben ja normal viele leben und die nächste Generation und so. Und die sollten sich dann eigentlich integrieren. Anfangen Deutsch zu reden und so weiter. Aber hier. Die Ausländer lernen Chinesisch um ein bisschen kommunizieren zu können. Aber werden für immer Ausländer bleiben. Die integrieren sich nicht. Und das liegt auch daran, dass sie bald wieder gehen. Und weil du hier auch einfach als Ausländer durchkommst. Und, ehm, in deinem Beruf auch mit Englisch durchkommst. Wahrscheinlich gerade weil du Deutscher bist. Hier bist bei der deutschen Firma. Da ist es nicht so richtig Integration.*

> citizenship. Reduced to their sociological content these stories are symbolic claims to urban citizenship: a claim of cultural citizenship (as "Old Shanghai hands" or "New Shanghailanders"), a claim of social citizenship (as witness to history and local residents), and a claim of economic citizenship (as "players" in Shanghai's global economy). Woven altogether—as they sometimes are—they form an ideal of a culturally cosmopolitan, locally integrated and economically contributing global/urban citizen, conveniently eliding the nation-state. Few settlers actually live up to this nearly impossible ideal, and thus these narratives of emplacement often serve as claims to relative virtue or entitlement in comparisons with other "foreigners." (Farrer 2010, 15).

Like Farrer's informants' "claims to relative virtue or entitlement," Antonia's claims to being Shanghainese should be seen as distinct among her expatriate classmates. At the same time, Antonia, like Farrer's informants, has a high ideal of being a "culturally cosmopolitan, locally integrated" citizen. Antonia's reflections show how it is difficult to "live up to this nearly impossible ideal." As the child of a mixed marriage who even speaks Chinese, she describes how she still feels she will never fit in.

> ANTONIA: *Well, I don't see myself as a foreigner. I consider myself Shanghainese. But others see me as a foreigner. They are nonetheless very nice to me, but somehow, they always see me as this exotic animal.*[68]

She further explains how Chinese society's refusal to accept her as Shanghainese leads her to doubt her Shanghainese identity and claims to "Chineseness." To be regarded as "Shanghainese," however, is also an impossible status for migrants from other parts of China, as briefly discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Consequently, while Antonia would otherwise consider herself Shanghainese, she feels like a foreigner because she believes she is seen as one. I have elaborated on her identity performances in Part I, but her descriptions are also interesting in the context of Shanghainese-expat relations. She notes:

> ANTONIA: *Well, you are welcome and people are hospitable and so on, but you are not integrated. [...] Guests stay guests.*[69]

Having shed light on the prominent divisions between locals and expats, I reiterate nevertheless that my discussions with the foreign youths gener-

---

68 German original: ANTONIA: *Also ich seh mich nicht als Ausländerin. Ich seh mich als Shanghainesin. Aber andere sehen mich als Ausländerin. Die sind dann zwar total freundlich zu mir. Aber halt irgendwie. Die sehen mich immer wie so ein exotisches Tier.*

69 German original: ANTONIA: *Ja, also man ist zwar willkommen und gastfreundlich und so, aber man ist nicht integriert. [...] Gäste bleiben Gäste.*

ally agreed with Farrer's findings on Shanghai, that "some form of cultural and social integration is seen as a desirable goal by most foreign migrants" (2010,16). Although a difficult pursuit, a few moments occur in which feelings of differences and otherness are forgotten, whether at "the shop," or during mundane practices:

> ANDREA: *I am closest to China when I walk my dog and, well, walk amongst Chinese people, and the Chinese man next to me is walking his dog, too. That is when I am close.*[70]

4.5 Concluding thoughts on the local-expat youth divide in Shanghai

When aiming to be part of Shanghai's cosmopolitan image, expatriate teenagers often turn to the city's spaces that are frequented by both foreigners and locals, as Chapter 2 of this part (on nightlife) illustrates. Further, the young expatriates explore and claim open spaces outside the traditional, glamorous image of the metropolis—such as the shop—to simply hang out with their friends. Their engagement with the city through such places serves an important function by helping them find a sense of emplacement, and to regain the agency they might have been missing after moving, which is always initiated by their parents. In order to foster a sense of continuity, community, and social standing, and to create comfortable ways of life (see Part III), however, the expatriates draw boundaries between themselves and Shanghai's "locals." The experience of emplacement and locality is thus, at the same time, tied to expatriate practices that attempt, to a certain extent, to exclude "China" from their everyday spaces—for example at the international schools, gated communities, Western restaurants, and imported food stores that expatriates frequent.

Focusing on the "diaspora space," a "point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of 'us' and 'them', are contested" (Brah 1996, 208–209) and by discussing students' ideas about "integration" in Shanghai, this chapter shows that transgressing or even dissolving the strong local-expat divide is generally difficult for expatriate teenagers. None of the students I accompanied during their everyday routines have local friends. These youths often see their expatriate community as self-sufficient or even "autonomous." Students feel that interacting with or even befriending Chinese people is difficult because they are considered different for being white. Most students gain this awareness of bodily differences, of being *consciously* white, suddenly and unprepared and they experience it as unsettling. As a consequence, they often seek out

70 German original: ANDREA: *Ich bin am nächsten zu China, wenn ich mit meinem Hund rausgehe, und, ja, und durch die Chinesen laufe und der Chinese neben mir auch seinen Hund ausführt. Dann bin ich am nächsten dran.*

places with large numbers of other white people. The teenagers are also intimidated by language and cultural barriers.

Furthermore, expatriate youths who were in frequent contact with Chinese children when they were younger experience Chinese teenagers as being too involved with their schoolwork and having no time for friendships or activities outside of school. Therefore, neither the Chinese and expat students' schools nor their leisure spaces coincide. The strong local-expat divide is therefore also related to a lack of concrete meeting places, a lack which is interpreted by some students as the Chinese government's way of keeping Chinese and foreign youths apart. Chinese passport holders are prohibited by the Shanghai municipal government from enrolling in international schools, and Chinese local schools are not an option—or at least a very difficult one—for foreign students, as the accounts by Greenspan (2008a; 2008b; 2011b; 2011a) above show. Expatriate teenagers consequently perceive the Chinese state as either intimidating or as not pertinent to them, emphasizing their different, even "special" status as foreign passport holders. Furthermore, the expatriate teenagers that attempt to cross such perceptions and borders feel that the Chinese youths regard them as "exotic" and that Chinese society only accepts them as "guests."

This lack of interaction with Chinese youths demonstrates that the most influential part of the move to Shanghai, for some students, might not necessarily be exploring or learning about the new cultural environment or specific cultural practices in Shanghai, but rather their general experience of "difference" and the emotional challenges associated with being uprooted. In the words of ethnographer Ghassan Hage (2005), who studied Lebanese communities in different national settings, "one should also be careful not to think that just because we feel we are crossing international borders, the change from one national culture to another is the most significant aspect of our move" (Hage 2005, 470).

Hage's words bring us back to the idea of transcultural perspectives that I described in the Introduction, to the students' own reflections on the various aspects and consequences of moving abroad. As described in Part I, Chapter 4, when tracing four students' different transcultural perspectives and identity positionings, this chapter shows in more detail how the experience of difference and attempts to overcome (as well as efforts to draw and maintain) boundaries are central to expatriate students' daily lives. The distinctions expatriate youths make towards "local" society and the apparent lack of opportunity to meet (as well as their meager interest in meeting) Shanghainese youths, originate in the transitory nature of their stay in Shanghai—an aspect of the expatriate lifestyle that is highlighted throughout this ethnography. The international students are all aware that the moment of moving on will come. For the youths I worked with at the German school, this moment coincides with graduation, an event that I discuss in all its elements of celebration and farewell—and the corresponding need to make decisions about the future that it places on all students—in the final part of this ethnography, "Moving On."



Figure 30. Home in Shanghai: Mia’s Room, Prepared for the Next Move. Photo by Mia.

PART V
Moving On

The final part of this ethnography, “Moving On,” returns to the expatriate youths’ experience of Shanghai as a transient space. The first chapter centers on the students from the German school and analyzes their ways of managing the imminent move away from Shanghai. It focuses on their graduation and its related festivities as a means to say goodbye to Shanghai and examines their plans, anticipations, and anxieties regarding their next stop: university. The second chapter concludes this work by revisiting the German students two years after they have left Shanghai and returned to Germany, focusing on their new beginnings there. It presents the students’ perspectives and reflections on transnational mobility and explores how their experience of “returning” is linked to the overall findings of this ethnography.

CHAPTER 1
Goodbyes and Graduation

> PETER: *Well, it's strange because I don't even know anymore what it is like to live in Germany. And you have, as I said, these stable points that you are focused on and that you rely on. And you have gotten this routine. And you have to rebuild all this again. Because every human being needs some kind of routine, I think. And I also need that. <L> And now this is … Because I live in a hotel and I don't have my things, and I don't have my things anywhere else <L> that means that, right now, I'm in the middle of nowhere.*[1]

After days of packing, Peter describes his situation as being "in the middle of nowhere." Peter's belongings are now in a container that will be shipped to Germany, and he and his family have moved into a hotel, where they will stay for the remainder of their time in Shanghai. Prior to moving out of his family's home, Peter's room probably looked similar to that of Mia (Figure 30) when she prepared for her move to Germany. Interestingly, she sent this image to me paired with a picture of her room as it looked when she lived in it (see Figure 11, in Part III, Chapter 2.2) as a response to my question of what "home" (in Shanghai) meant to her. Evidently, for Mia, home meant both her room in Shanghai and the routine of packing and leaving it behind. This transitory experience is shared by all students featured in this ethnography. Their complex notion of home, as illustrated by Mia's pictures, has been succinctly conceptualized by Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castañeda, Anne-Marie Fortier, and Mimi Scheller's (2003) idea of "uprootings/regroundings," which allows one to consider home and migration to be not mutually exclusive. I have already discussed the issue of home-making or "regrounding" in Part III, Chapter 2, and throughout this ethnography, but this final chapter is concerned with the other, concomitant aspect, "uprooting," and how the students experienced the move away from Shanghai.

1 German original: PETER: *Ja, ist schon komisch. Weil ich weiß gar nicht mehr wie es ist in Deutschland zu leben. Und man hat, wie gesagt, seine festen Punkte worauf man sich drauf fixiert hat und wo man sich drauf verlässt. Und halt diese Routine bekommen hat. Und das muss man erstmal alles wieder aufbauen. Weil eine gewisse Routine braucht, glaube ich, jeder Mensch. Und ich brauch die auch. <L> Und die ist jetzt erst mal … Weil ich wohn im Hotel und ich hab meine Sachen nicht. Und ich hab nirgendwo anders meine Sachen. <L> Das heißt ich bin gerade irgendwie so mitten im nowhere.*

For the majority of expatriate youths, graduation from school coincides with leaving China. While some of the teenagers' families stay in Shanghai, others only wait for their children to complete school before moving on. Consequently, for some students, even their place of return—the family home—shifts and, as a result, will make future visits to Shanghai impossible or difficult. Therefore, in comparison to youths whose parents remain in a more or less stable location, graduation is also a closing ceremony for, as Olivia from Belgium puts it, the "Shanghai-chapter" of their lives.

I returned to Shanghai for two weeks in May and June of 2012, to observe the students from the German school during this period of change. It was also my final visit to Shanghai, and thus my own farewell: to the city, to my friends, and to "my field," which was slowly dissolving since the majority of the actors that inform my study were about to move on. During this very intense fortnight, the students and I bonded over the common theme of saying goodbye and having to face the question "What next?"

The morning after my arrival in Shanghai, I visit the German school to find some of the students gathered for their final oral exams. They are nervously going through their notes, rehearsing topics with each other, explaining matters that might somehow be related to their exam topics, and trying to calm each other down at the same time. This cycle repeats itself the following day, when the other half of the students sit their exams. I am happy to see all of them again and to catch up on the latest news, especially on their plans for the coming days: exams, the announcement of the final results, parties, dinners, club visits, the commencement ceremony and festivities, the much-anticipated graduation ball, the ball's after-party, and a farewell barbecue at "the shop." We go on final shopping tours at the fabric and glass markets and simply hang out at the students' homes. In-between observing and occasionally participating in these joyful events, I meet ten students for individual, hour-long follow-up interviews to discuss their future plans, the decision-making process that led to moving away, their feelings about leaving Shanghai and finishing school, as well as their anticipation and any anxiety they have about entering university. These matters are presented in detail in the following three subsections.

1.1 Leaving Shanghai

Andrea and I are sitting outside, on the narrow pavement in front of the same café where we met for our first interview, just around the corner from her parents' apartment. It is our third interview and, by now, she knows the procedure. The street noise level occasionally requires us to shout at each other, but we enjoy our ginger lemon tea nonetheless. We start talking about the stressful exam period, the celebrations surrounding graduation, and her plans for the summer and beyond. When I inquire how she feels about leaving Shanghai, it is apparent that she is still sorting out her thoughts and emotions about moving.

ANDREA: *It's okay. I mean, it's just normal that you move somewhere else for your studies, that you somehow move on. And I've been here for seven years now.*
INTERVIEWER: *Seven years.*
ANDREA: *Yes, quite a while. And, I mean it, erm, has been home for seven years. But I am, my opinion is ... [Pause] Okay, well I am of the opinion that ... Well, yes, I will miss it. Very much. I will also cry, probably, once I'm sitting on the plane.*[2]

Andrea is still trying to forge her narrative of moving on—caught between the normality of moving away from home for college and her sadness about leaving Shanghai, possibly for good.

Mia expresses similar feelings about saying goodbye to Shangahi when she and I meet to discuss her upcoming departure. We sit on her bed, drinking water, in contemplative silence—quite unlike the street noise in the background during my conversation with Andrea. Eventually Mia formulates her feelings:

MIA: *[Leaving feels] strange. [...] I've spent most of my life in Shanghai. [...] I was away now and then and so on, but I've been here for six years in total, and everywhere else I've only spent two or three years. And that's why this is really my home. It is ... Here, I know my way around best, I know the people; the people know me. Here, even though I only speak a little Chinese, I manage. [...] Yes, when I walk through the city, I know where I am, I know how to get where I want to go. [...] Even if you've been here for a long time, it never gets boring. [...] And sure, on the one hand, I'm also looking [forward to new things.] On the other hand, nevertheless, I could stay. I wouldn't have a problem with that. [...] Actually, I don't want to leave.*[3]

2 German original: ANDREA: *Auch okay. Ich mein, also es ist ja normal, dass man zum Studium dann woanders hingeht, dass man irgendwie weitergeht. Und ich war jetzt sieben Jahre hier.* INTERVIEWER: *Sieben Jahre.* ANDREA: *Ja, schon lange. Und, ich mein, es ist ehm, Zuhause, gewesen, sieben Jahre. Aber ich bin, meine Meinung ist. [Pause]. Okay, also ich bin halt der Meinung, dass, ... Also ja ich werd es schon vermissen. Sehr. Ich werd auch weinen, wahrscheinlich, wenn ich dann so im Flieger sitz.*

3 German original: MIA: *[Wegzugehen ist] komisch. [...] Ich hab die längste Zeit meines Lebens in Shanghai gewohnt. [...] Zwischendurch war ich ja weg und so, aber insgesamt war ich ja sechs Jahre hier, und überall anders war ich so zwei, drei. Und deswegen, hier ist wirklich mein Zuhause. Es ist ... Hier kenne ich mich am Besten aus, hier kenne ich die Leute, hier kennen die Leute mich. Hier, selbst wenn ich Chinesisch nur bröckchenhaft spreche, ich komme zurecht. [...] Wenn ich durch die Stadt laufe, ich weiß wo ich bin, ich weiß wie ich da hinkomme wo ich hin will. [...] Selbst wenn man schon so lange hier ist, es wird einfach nicht langweilig. [...] Und klar freue ich mich auch [auf Neues] einerseits. Aber andererseits, trotzdem, könnte ich auch noch bleiben, da hätte ich kein Problem mit. [...] Also ich will eigentlich nicht weg.*

Mia has mixed feelings about the imminent changes. Leaving Shanghai means leaving the familiar behind. For Andrea and Mia, there will be no family home in Shanghai to return to during university breaks, nor for Olivia, who summarizes her sentiments about leaving in an interview at the French café close to her school:

> OLIVIA: *Well, the school in Shanghai is the one I went to the longest, ever. That's why I find it hard. Because I have so many memories, especially because I've spent my youth here. That's what you always like to remember. Yes, good friends, first love, bla bla bla—all that existed. Yes, I will have a lot of memories here. And it is difficult to suddenly … I mean, I can't decide upon leaving now, I have to [leave]. My dad has to move because of work. That's why I don't really have a choice. And, well, the farewell is difficult for me.*[4]

Interestingly, even after graduation, Olivia feels she has no choice of staying on in Shanghai and decides to move to Belgium with her family. Some students' families, such as Antonia's, Xia's, Bjorn's, Charlie's, and Kressi's will stay in Shanghai. For some students, as in Giovanni's case, one parent will stay for work and the other will return "home" with the younger siblings, but for the students whose families are about to leave Shanghai altogether, graduation is not only a goodbye to their peers and the school, but also to their house and the city. The possibility of returning for visits is therefore rather uncertain.

> MIA: *I have no idea when I will come back here. And I know that, by then, everything will have changed anyway. Well, I hope that I will make it [back] some time in the next school year, because then there will still be people here that I know.*[5]

4 German original: OLIVIA: *Also [in] Shanghai ist die Schule wo ich am längsten drauf war, je. Deswegen, das fällt mir schon schwer. Weil ich hab hier total viele memories, vor allem weil ich meine Jugend hier verbracht hab. Da erinnert man sich ja immer gerne dran. Ja, gute Freunde, erste Liebe, bla bla bla - das gab's halt. Also doch, ich werde schon viele memories hier haben. Und es ist schon schwer, das alles so auf einmal… Ich meine ich kann es ja nicht entscheiden, dass ich hier jetzt weggehe, ich muss ja. Mein Papa muss ja umziehen wegen der Arbeit. Deswegen hab ich ja nicht wirklich eine Wahl. Und, also der Abschied fällt mir schon schwer.*

5 German original: MIA: *Ich habe keine Ahnung wann ich wieder hierherkomme. Und ich weiß ja, bis dahin ist eh wieder alles anders. Also ich hoffe halt noch, dass ich es irgendwann im nächsten Schuljahr noch schaffe, weil dann sind noch Leute da, die ich kenne.*

1.2 Celebrating twice: graduation and goodbyes

The students expend many resources and efforts on shaping their final weeks in Shanghai and their final days at school. Graduation, for them, involves preparing several events and memorabilia. The major event is the graduation ball, which the students traditionally organize themselves. Preparations include finding ways to fund the event, choosing and renting a suitable venue, organizing a caterer and decorations, and creating the program for the evening. Furthermore, the class is busy writing, designing, and getting their “Abibuch” (a special graduation yearbook) printed, as well as preparing an after-party, which will take place at another downtown location, after the formal ball. The 31 students estimate that they spend about RMB 300,000 (€33,000) on these celebrations. Part of this sizable amount comes from ticket sales for the ball, which cost RMB 400 (€44) each, yearbooks, which cost RMB 100 (€11) each, and fundraising activities, such as bake sales, that took place at the school during the last term. Several foreign companies also sponsored the event for a sum amounting to around RMB 160,000 (€17,600). The celebratory events like the ball will take place in addition to the official commencement ceremony that is organized by and will be held at the school. The students shape this event to some extent, too, since they contribute a few musical performances and a student speech.

The importance of this official ceremony, which values students’ achievements and celebrates their graduation, becomes apparent in Mia’s anticipation a few days prior to the event:

> MIA: *I am really looking forward to it. I am sure it will be really beautiful. I think I will be really sad. When you just notice that, well, school is over now. Really! If you think back… It is the only thing you remember! The time before school […] well, I personally don’t recall that anymore. And even if you were in pre-school before and in Kindergarten before that, you had something every day. And the time before that—you really can’t remember! That’s why. Really strange, I think. Really weird.*[6]

Mia ponders the school routine, and the significance of losing something that has accompanied her throughout her life. The end of this period is met with anticipation and joy, as well as sadness. However, it is not only the end of school, but also the end of their time in Shanghai that the expatriate community celebrates with these ritual festivities.

6 German original: MIA: *Ich freu mich richtig drauf. Das wird bestimmt richtig schön. Ich werde glaube ich total am Ende sein. Wenn man einfach merkt, so, ja, jetzt ist die Schule vorbei. Es ist wirklich so! Wenn man zurückdenkt … Das ist das Einzige woran man sich erinnern kann. An die Zeit vor der Schule […] also, ich persönlich weiß es nicht mehr. […] Und selbst wenn, davor war man in der Vorschule und davor im Kindergarten. Das heißt auch da hatte man täglich was. Und an die Zeit davor erinnert man sich ja wirklich nicht! Deswegen. Richtig seltsam, finde ich. Richtig komisch.*

Graduation ceremonies are rites of passage which, for the students in Shanghai, are part of a larger farewell ceremony. According to ethnographer Arnold van Gennep ([1960] 1992, 11), who introduced the notion of important, life-changing rituals as “rites of passage” with the general aim of insuring a “change of condition or a passage from one magico-religious or secular group to another,” such processes undergo three different phases: the preliminal or separation phase, the liminal or transitional phase, and the postliminal or incorporation phase. Van Gennep, however, noted that not all rituals consist of all phases and that it is impossible to “achieve as rigid a classification as the botanists have” (ibid.).

The commencement ceremony that I attended at the German school can be seen as an essential element of the first part of these rites of passage—the separation phase, as well as of a process of the students’ change in status from high school to university student, and an opening to the transitional phase—a phase that is celebrated after the graduation ceremony at the graduation dance and the students’ after-party. Because the commencement ceremony was undertaken in a routine way that I—and seemingly everyone else attending—was familiar with and had anticipated, I will not fully analyze that ritual here.[7] Neither will I focus on a theoretical discussion of the graduation ball or the after-party. Instead, in the passages which follow, I will illustrate the overall mood of the festivities I attended, as well as the thoughts of the students and the school community they are a part of, to further underline the challenges, emotions, and possibilities this moment of leaving Shanghai holds for expatriate youths. Nevertheless, Van Gennep’s notion of the rites of passage helps us to understand the importance of such festivities in guiding students’ transition from high school to university, and from Shanghai to elsewhere.

THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

It is the day of commencement and I am sitting next to Bjorn’s brother and the rest of his family. The soon-to-be graduates are seated in neat rows of chairs on both sides of a stage. They are attired for the occasion: the girls in dresses, the boys in suits. Equipped with a camera and my field notebook, I wait among the parents, siblings, and students’ friends, for the event to start. We all read the small program, which helpers from the school have distributed on the long rows of mats that have been used to convert the steps in the piazza into seats. The evening begins with music and a welcome by the school principal. A small group of students from the elementary school leads us through the evening; their announcements repeatedly amuse the audience. The school’s mu-

7 Magolda (2003) describes, concerning college commencement ceremonies in the US, how these formal celebrations follow a rather strict pattern.

sical stars, various prize winners, play and sing between the different speeches. The German consul general talks about the high level of the exams, about the opportunities and challenges of being an expat, and cites the current federal president of Germany, Joachim Gauck, who calls for commitment to society. A representative for the German industry and commerce in Shanghai follows with a humorous but also political speech and—probably with an eye on his preceding speaker—thanks the German ministry of foreign affairs, hereby stressing the importance of their financial support, which is always contested. The two head teachers of the graduating class give a speech that evokes much laughter and is accompanied by photos of all the students on class outings.

Then, after a musical intermission, the school principal gives his full speech before the diplomas are handed out. Starting with political explanations and concerns about changes and lessened interest from the German government in financing German schools abroad, the principal appeals to parents and German companies to make their needs of this support heard. After this political digression, he announces the average grades and is proud of the results that are, as he emphasizes, above the German average. He then recounts various school events (trips, arts, and sporting events) to stress how important it is to be involved in such social activities, in addition to earning good grades. Finally, he cites Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who, according to him, said that "parents should give roots and wings to children" (Wurzeln und Flügel soll man den Kindern mitgeben). He elaborates on the relations students have to different places and how many will move to Germany, Switzerland, or wherever their roots are. However, he declares "one part of your roots is also our school" (aber ein Teil eurer Wurzeln ist auch unsere Schule), naming a few students who have been in Shanghai since kindergarten. He then turns to the second part of Goethe's suggestion for educating children—the wings:

> Your wings are—not only because of all the miles that you have already travelled up in the air—much stronger and more flexible than those of your future classmates at university. They will carry you. You will realize: you, as the graduates of a German school abroad [...], are special. This should not be a reason to become arrogant—and you aren't. Public-spirited, cool, and nice young people exist everywhere. You will nonetheless attract attention. Because the experiences one brings along, the things you know and are familiar with, stick to you like a second skin. And something else is sticking to you that is different to most other youths—namely, a certain familiarity with the world, a familiarity with things that are different and foreign to others. Due to your experiences in the world, you are in some respects more independent, flexible, and open and therefore you will see and grasp more opportunities. However, others also have special expectations of you. I am

> sure—we are sure—you will be able to meet these. We are sure you will fly.[8]

This sentiment, which I have tried to reconstruct here from my frenetically-scribbled notes, marks the end of the principal's speech and is met with enthusiastic applause. Interestingly, it mirrors the narrative of privilege and pressure that I came across in students' descriptions of international schooling that was highlighted in Part III, Chapter 3.4.

After the school principal's speech—marking the separation phase of the ritual (Van Gennep [1960] 1992)—the diplomas are handed out to all the students in alphabetical order. Applause greets the students when their names are called and as they step out onto the stage, receiving handshakes, diplomas, gifts, and a photo. After the diplomas are distributed, a few parents gather on stage to sing a song (not as perfectly as their children) and, finally, three female students—Mia and Antonia among them—give the last speech of the evening.

The three girls first start recalling their last years as students. In a humorous way, they describe conflicts and debates, as well as positive memories. One after the other, their classmates step onto the stage, according to their arrival time in Shanghai, to create a timeline which ranges from kindergarten until 2010, only two years prior. After sharing these memories, the students' speech culminates in thanking parents, teachers, siblings, the school principal, and the technician responsible that evening. "We are all only here because of our parents and, at this point, we want to say thank you for that."[9] This line is met with laughter, applause, and cheers from the audience, which consists primarily of family members. This response in particular shows how important this statement is for many parents. Their children's acknowledgment of the beneficial aspects of their experience in Shanghai may alleviate any remaining feelings of anger or guilt that the move initially prompted (see Part II). As they continue with their speech, the graduates combine a farewell to their high school days with a farewell to Shanghai. Contemplating the uncertainties of the future

8 German original: *Die Flügel sind bei euch – und nicht nur wegen der vielen Flugmeilen, die ihr alle schon zurückgelegt habt –, sind bei euch stärker und flexibler ausgeprägt als bei euren zukünftigen Kommilitonen an den Unis. Sie werden euch tragen. Ihr werdet das merken. Ihr seid als Absolventen einer deutschen Auslandsschule […] besonders. Das soll kein Grund sein, überheblich zu werden – und das seid ihr auch nicht. Engagierte, coole und nette junge Leute gibt es überall. Ihr werdet trotzdem auffallen. Weil einem das, was man an Erfahrungen mitbringt und was man kennt und was einem vertraut ist wie eine zweite Haut anhaftet. Und euch haftet anderes an als den meisten anderen Jugendlichen – nämlich eine gewisse Vertrautheit mit der Welt, Vertrautheit mit dem, was anders ist und was anderen fremd ist. Weil ihr aufgrund eurer Erfahrungen in der Welt in mancher Hinsicht selbständiger, flexibler und offener seid, werdet ihr auch mehr Chancen sehen und wahrnehmen können. Man wird aber vielleicht auch besondere Erwartungen an euch richten. Ich bin sicher, wir sind sicher, ihr werdet dem gerecht werden können. Wir sind sicher, ihr werdet fliegen.*

9 German original: *Wir alle sind nur wegen unserer Eltern hier und möchten uns an dieser Stelle dafür bedanken.*

and the difficulties of choosing a career path, they end on a cheerful note, which is followed by much applause: "But one thing we do understand: Namely, what we have to celebrate. To have been a student yesterday, to be almost an adult tomorrow, but especially that today we are young."[10]

This last line of the girls' address can be seen as a transition into what Van Gennep ([1960] 1992) conceptualized as the second phase of a rite of passage—the liminal or transition phase. Victor Turner, who continued developing and illustrating Van Gennep's notion of liminality in rite-of-passage processes, describes the liminal phase as a condition where people "slip through the network of classification" and are "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" ([1969] 2008, 95). Likewise, as the speech given by the three girls indicates, being young is understood as both being free from the obligations of high school as well as of those of adulthood. "Young" here means celebrating without having greater responsibilities. The last line is a call for the start of these celebrations, now that the youths have their diplomas in hand. Based on Van Gennep's ([1960] 1992) and Victor Turner's ([1969] 2008) understanding of liminality in the ritual process, social anthropologist Allan Sande (2002) describes this phase of partying among recent graduates in Norway as a phase that allows youths to behave in ways that are against the cultural norm and that break moral rules. Sande, who particularly illustrates the role of alcohol and intoxication in Norwegian graduation celebrations, suggests that the youths become detached from society during that time, to then be ascribed adult status once this liminal phase is over.

Following the graduation ceremony, a dinner is hosted for everyone at the school. After eating at the buffet and conversing with parents, taking photos, and receiving congratulations, the students leave for Mural. This is the first unofficial party that everyone joins, but it is also a time for reminiscing and bidding farewell to their favorite party location. Siblings and friends who used to live in Shanghai and, like me, came from Germany to be part of the celebrations, join in. Parents and teachers are not part of this club visit. However, they participate to an extent in the graduation ball and after party that take place the following day.

THE GRADUATION BALL AND AFTER-PARTY

The next day, I meet some of "the girls" at noon at a hairdresser located in the same compound where Olivia lives. Olivia, Charlie, and Mia have appointments to get their hair done for the graduation ball. I take photos and watch them get styled. Back at Olivia's house, the three girls and I put

10 German original: *Aber eins verstehen wir. Ganz sicher. Nämlich, was wir feiern müssen: Gestern Schüler gewesen zu sein. Morgen fast erwachsen zu werden. Vor allem aber, dass wir heute jung sind.*

on make-up and slip into our dresses. Mascara and eye shadow are passed around as we all get excited about the upcoming evening. Olivia's parents are also there and are very supportive. In the late afternoon, their driver takes us to the event location on the South Bund. We have to get there early, because the students have one more practice for a dance choreography they will be performing that evening. I watch them rehearse, scribble a few notes in my diary, and take photos. By now, I am shivering in my evening dress, in the freezer-like, empty, air-conditioned hall. I am glad to see the first guests arrive; we gather upstairs in the rooftop bar for our first drink of the evening. Here, the temperature of an early-summer evening in Shanghai feels comfortable and the breathtaking view of the Pudong skyline and the passing ships on the Bund leaves everyone in awe (Figure 31).



Figure 31. Impressions from the Graduation Ball: View of the Bund. Photo by M. Sander.

Everyone, including me, takes pictures of the well-dressed people, the sunset, and the view; there is also a professional photographer, whom the students hired for the night. The setting clearly distinguishes the event from graduation balls in Germany. While the latter mostly take place in gymnasiums or auditoriums, the chosen location in Shanghai is a former warehouse that has been converted to a very high standard. Many guests congratulate the students for their great choice of this venue right by the docks that combines a marvelous view with simple elegance. Eventually, the guests move inside and are seated at large round tables according to a seating order the students have discussed for months. I join a table with some older siblings, friends, and former students of the school. The

graduates all sit at a long table in the center of the hall. The evening features a buffet dinner, several talks, the students' dance, and a few pranks and games, including a high-heel-shoe running contest with the teachers. The graduates also show a home-made movie that features them talking about their classmates and their future plans, as well as saying thank you. I mingle and take photos (Figure 32).



Figure 32: Students Posing at their Graduation Ball. Photo by M. Sander.

Around midnight, the students get ready to leave the location and invite everyone to move to the after-party location: a lounge bar in the heart of Shanghai's former French concession that the graduates rented for the occasion. The tickets for the graduation ball come with a lace band wrapped around them, indicating each guest's table number in Chinese characters. Later, if you wear the band around your wrist at the after-party, all drinks at the bar are free. Only the students, their friends and siblings, and several teachers come along. Parents are nowhere to be seen.

Now, intoxication and partying, which Sande (2002) describes as important parts of this rite of passage, are in full swing. Drinking and dancing with (now former) teachers creates a generally euphoric atmosphere as old barriers are torn down. The girls have all changed out of their long evening gowns and into short cocktail dresses; many pairs of high heels have been replaced by ballet flats. I busy myself with taking pictures and, after a while, students begin to ask me to take photos of them with their friends. I am happy to replace the photographer who has left by now, but also use the time to chat with various students. As the evening wears on, more and more students are found outside, in a small alley behind the club, sitting on the ground, talking to their friends, and enjoying the last of "their" night.

1.3 Moving on: anticipation and anxieties

During my final visit to Shanghai, the students and I bonded over the shared feeling of an unknown future and the difficulty of choosing a career path. Mia's description of her struggle to make such a choice illustrates feelings expressed by the majority of the students I talked to:

MIA: *That was already a topic a year ago: "And what are your plans after graduation?" "Hmm." That is so ... At least I always had an answer, but it has changed a lot during the last year [...].*

INTERVIEWER: *And why did you actually abandon the idea of studying design?*

MIA: *I don't know [...]. It was always like [...] actually, I shouldn't mind, but there were always two possible answers. Some always said: "Oh, great!" and the others always said: "Hmm. Well, you can't really earn a lot with that" or something similar. It was not necessarily about money, but simply like, you just can't really ... So many people do that. Well, there were always these kinds of reactions and somehow that made me think again. And then, one day, I was sitting, well, that was during Chinese New Year holidays, just before the written exams ... I was sitting downstairs with my mother and we were talking and then I said, "Yes, actually I could also do something else." On a sheet of paper on the table I wrote down everything that I find interesting. There were ten different things on it, some actually*

> *going into very different directions. [...] And then I thought, okay, I can take a look again at what I want to do. There are so many opportunities [...]. Shouldn't underestimate that. And that's why I am still looking and then I will apply.*[11]

Trying to find a path into the future, Mia weighs her interests, the opinions of friends and parents, and future job opportunities as well as possible income. Many scholarly explanations for youths' career choices and their employment histories have shifted their focus "towards poststructuralist accounts in which individuals' choices and their ability to judge and negotiate risk are seen as important in shaping their biographies" (Valentine 2003, 41). Despite this individualization, social networks as "product[s] of specific social and physical environments," still play a major role in "providing information about employment opportunities [...] and in developing social and cultural capital" (ibid.) As Mia's account demonstrates, this influence of the social network on career choices can also be observed among expatriate teenagers in Shanghai. For many of the students, the choice of a university program also goes along with the decision to relocate. Some set their priorities according to the likelihood of being accepted at a specific university, while others chose a location that appeals to them and then consider the different options for studying there. Olivia, for instance, wants to move back to her parents' home town in Belgium.

> OLIVIA: *I've been abroad for some time now. And my parents have always hinted at, pointed out that they would like it if I came with them to Belgium to study there. And that I then would do the exact same thing that they did back then—to study in [their city]. Well, I still know a few people in Belgium. They are all going to [study there] as well, so I will also see them again*

---

11 German original: MIA: *Das war schon vor einem Jahr so: "Und was hast du für Pläne nach dem Abitur?" "Hmm" Das ist halt immer so ... Ich hatte halt wenigstens immer eine Antwort, aber es hat sich halt innerhalb des letzten Jahres stark gewandelt. [...]* INTERVIEWER: *Und wieso bist du dann von Design eigentlich abgekommen, so?* MIA: *Ich weiß nicht. [...] Also, es war immer so, [...] eigentlich sollte es mich nicht wirklich stören, aber es gab immer zwei mögliche Antworten: Die einen haben immer gesagt „Oh, super toll!" Und die anderen immer so: „Hmm. Ja, da kann man jetzt eher nicht so viel mit verdienen" oder so. [Es ging] noch nicht einmal unbedingt ums Geld, sondern einfach so, du kannst halt nicht so ... Das machen so viele Leute. Ja, und dann waren da immer solche Reaktionen und irgendwie hat mich das dann noch mal ins Nachdenken gebracht. Und dann saß ich irgendwann, also in den Chinese Newyear Ferien war das, also kurz vor dem schriftlichen Abitur ... Da saß ich so unten mit meiner Mutter und [wir] haben uns so unterhalten und dann meinte ich: „Ja, eigentlich kann ich auch was anderes machen." So Zettel rausgeholt und alles aufgeschrieben was mich interessiert. Da standen dann, glaube ich, irgendwie zehn Dinge, die teilweise echt in verschiedene Richtungen gingen. [...] Ja. Und dann dachte ich, okay, dann kann ich ja noch einmal gucken, was ich jetzt mache. Es gibt so viele Möglichkeiten. [...] Sollte man nicht unterschätzen. Und deswegen bin ich jetzt immer noch am Gucken und dann werd ich mich bewerben.*

> *there. And the girls, my friends from Shanghai, [...] they also study close to where I will go. So I will get to know Belgium a little. Because, I mean, I was very young when I left Belgium. [...] I would like to get to know Belgium a little, well, Europe in general. And that's why, yes, I want to move to Belgium.*[12]

Olivia's quote not only reveals her parents' influence on her choice of university location, but also her own desire to reconnect with her past, her broader family, and her national culture and mother tongue. It is these manifold desires and influences that the students must now negotiate when leaving Shanghai and choosing their next step—and stop—in their lives. Based on their ethnographic work with young people in Finland, Elina Lahelma and Tuula Gordon (2003, 381) argue that "moving away from home is full of ambivalence for young people. Most of them talk about it with terms of hopes, but also with terms of fear." Although "home" is a flexible, rhizomatic nework of locations, practices, and ideas for most expatriate youths in my study (see Part III, Chapter 2), this is true for them as well. Furthermore, for the students in Shanghai, moving away from their family home often coincides with this home no longer existing. The following sections therefore highlight their specific fears and hopes.

THE CHALLENGE OF EVERYDAY PRACTICALITIES

Many of the students I interviewed grew up with housekeeping staff at home and parents who demanded that their children focus on school rather than concerning themselves with the chores and demands of a household. Consequently, a few of the young people's accounts reflect a fear that their future homes will lack the necessary equipment for preparing food or doing laundry, or that they themselves lack the skills to handle those tasks. Additionally, the students are nervous about unfamiliar lifestyles, such as student life in Germany. Peter, for instance, uses our interview to bombard me with questions about living in a shared flat with other students in Germany.

---

12 German original: OLIVIA: *Ich bin jetzt ja schon eine Weile im Ausland. Und meine Eltern haben immer so, so kleine Anspielungen drauf gemacht, also immer so ein bisschen drauf hingedeutet, dass sie es toll finden würden wenn ich mit nach Belgien käme und da studieren würde. Und dass ich dann halt auch genau das mache, was sie damals gemacht haben – also in [Name der Stadt] studieren. Und, ja, ich kenn ja auch noch ein paar Leute in Belgien. Die gehen halt auch alle nach [Name der Stadt], dass heißt die sehe ich da auch wieder. Und die Mädels, also die Freunde aus Shanghai, [...] die studieren ja auch in der Nähe von da wo ich hingehe. Damit ich auch ein bisschen Belgien kenne. Weil ich meine, ich war sehr jung wo ich weggezogen bin aus Belgien. [...] Ich würd schon gern auch Belgien ein bisschen kennenlernen, also allgemein Europa. Und deswegen ja, also ich will schon nach Belgien gehen.*

PETER: *How is it to shop as a collective? Do you label your things? [...] Does everyone clean all the rooms or does everyone individually clean their own rooms? [...] What about dishes? Does everyone bring their own?*[13]

Peter is not alone in his questions and concerns. When I meet Xia, the Chinese national whose story I described in detail in Part I, Chapter 4, to discuss his plans for the summer, he reports that he wants to prepare for his studies. When I inquire what these preparations include, he explains:

XIA: *Searching for an apartment. And learning how to cook.*
INTERVIEWER: *Learning how to cook? <L>*
XIA: *Actually, I've been wanting to learn how to cook for a while now. But I didn't manage to. I will try in the summer.*
INTERVIEWER: *And who will teach you?*
XIA: *My mother. But I already thought: Well, I will get lunch at university. In the mornings and evenings, I will eat rice and, erm, I don't know what else. Bread and sandwiches, because that seems easier than Chinese meals, where everything needs to be cooked. That is easier to prepare.*
INTERVIEWER: *Well, cheese, bread, stick it together—that is of course easier.*
XIA: *The food could be tasty. In the past, I couldn't get used to cheese, but now I actually like it, if it is well-prepared, has a good filling. Sandwiches.*[14]

When I comment that learning how to prepare Chinese dishes might be nice, as they may not be readily available in Germany, Xia shares his worries about missing China and Chinese food by relating the experience of several friends:

XIA: *I am in touch with other people who graduated last year or the year prior from our school. Mostly Chinese people. Chinese connection. And one girl told me that after half a year she was homesick for China. She found that, in China, people are much*

13 German original PETER: *Wie ist das in der WG einzukaufen? Markierst du da deine Sachen? [...] Hat dann auch jeder die Zimmer gemacht? Oder macht das Zimmer jeder einzeln? [...] Wie ist das denn mit dem Geschirr? Hat da jeder seins?*

14 German original: XIA: *Wohnungssuche. Und kochen lernen.* INTERVIEWER: *Kochen lernen? <L>* XIA: *Eigentlich wollte ich schon lange kochen lernen. Aber ich hab das nicht geschafft. Im Sommer werd ich's mal versuchen.* INTERVIEWER: *Und wer wird dir das beibringen?* XIA: *Meine Mutter. Aber ich hab mir schon gedacht: Also Mittagessen gibt es an der Uni. Morgens, abends, gibt es dann Reis und ehm. Ich weiß nicht was es dann sonst noch gibt. Mit Abendbrot und Sandwiches. Weil das kommt mir irgendwie einfacher vor als chinesisches Essen, wo alles gekocht wird. Das ist einfacher vorzubereiten so.* INTERVIEWER: *Also Käse, Brot, patsch zusammen – das ist natürlich einfacher.* XIA: *Das Essen könnte ganz lecker sein. Also früher konnte ich [mich] an Käse nicht gewöhnen, aber jetzt mag ich das eigentlich, wenn es gut zubereitet, gut belegt ist. Brötchen.*

more open than in Germany. And the other said she was homesick for Chinese vegetables. In Germany there is only salad. In China there are so many different varieties of vegetables.[15]

While many freshmen will experience similar concerns (whether they have had the advantage of an *ayi* or not), Xia's fear is compounded by the knowledge that he will also lack access to the necessary incredients to prepare his favorite foods. In other words, Xia's concerns about not being able to take care of himself in Germany are not limited to household practicalities, but also to simply feeling comfortable there. For expatriate youths, anxiety about moving on—or, in some cases, moving "back"—parallels larger anxieties about missing familiar things and the fear of not being able to fit in.

THE FEAR OF NOT FITTING IN

ANTONIA: *And I also don't know how I will fit in in Germany, because I am not really German. I am also not really Chinese, but I am really not German. I think I will have a few problems. A few.*[16]

Charlie shares Antonia's fears about not fitting in upon her move to Germany. When we sit in a noisy coffee shop over breakfast, Charlie describes how, for her, this fear is particularly tied to prior experiences of racism and "othering" that she has endured due to her Asian phenotype.

CHARLIE: *We always think that, in Germany, everyone stares at us. [...] But it could be that we just simply imagine all that.*

INTERVIEWER: *Sure, you stand out. <x> I do believe that there is still a lot of racism in Germany.*

CHARLIE: *But I think those are the uneducated people. It will be different at university. [...] I am used to it. Kindergarten and elementary school and so on. Although not actually in kindergarten. The small children don't notice. For them everyone looks the same. [...] At elementary school, like in fourth grade, it starts. With*

---

15 German original: XIA: *Ich hab ja auch Kontakt zu anderen Leuten, die letztes Jahr, vorletztes Jahr an der Schule absolviert haben. Meistens auch chinesische Leute. Chinese Connection. Und ein Mädchen hat schon gemeint, nach einem halben Jahr hatte sie schon Heimweh nach China. Sie meinte in China sind die Leute viel offener als in Deutschland. Und die andere meinte Heimweh nach chinesischen Gemüsen. In Deutschland gibt es nur Salat. In China gibt es so viele verschiedene Arten von Gemüsen.*

16 German original: ANTONIA: *Und ich weiß auch nicht wie ich in Deutschland reinpassen werde, weil ich bin auch nicht wirklich deutsch. Ich bin auch nicht wirklich chinesisch, aber ich bin wirklich nicht wirklich deutsch. Ich glaub ich werd ein bisschen Probleme haben. So ein bisschen.*

jokes and so on. Okay. But I think everyone has gone through something similar. Almost everyone.[17]

The prospect of moving to Germany reminds Charlie of painful experiences of exclusion from her past. Moving on is connected to the complicated negotiations of home and cultural belonging that I explore throughout this ethnography, particularly in the introduction and Part III, Chapter 2. Simultaneously, Charlie's anxiety about not fitting in is also linked to the fear of not being able to share the positive experiences of her time in Shanghai:

CHARLIE: *But I also heard that sometimes people at university are not really tolerant when you say you come from Shanghai. They think that you want to brag or something. That you want to get attention. Antonia, I believe, has experienced this. [...] She described how great Shanghai is, maybe exaggerated a bit, but isn't it normal that you tell how beautiful the city is and so on? And then there are people who are jealous or something. That is unfortunate.*[18]

Nonetheless, all these concerns are accompanied by a sense of anticipation and hope.

HOPES AND ANTICIPATION

While, for some students, leaving Shanghai brings with it a greater physical distance from family, a few teenagers look forward to reconnecting with family members "back home."

OLIVIA: *On the other hand, I am really happy. I like changes. I like to get to know new people, new cultures, new cities; that's what I'm looking forward to very much. I only know Belgium from*

17 German original: CHARLIE: *Wir denken immer in Deutschland schauen uns alle doof an. [...] Aber kann sein, dass wir uns das alles einbilden.* INTERVIEWER: *Klar, ihr fallt halt auf. <x> Ich glaube schon, dass es immer noch sehr viel Rassismus in Deutschland gibt.* CHARLIE: *Aber das sind glaube ich die ungebildeten Leute. An der Uni wird das anders sein. [...] Bin ich ja schon dran gewöhnt. Kindergarten und Grundschule und so. Obwohl Kindergarten eigentlich nicht. Die kleinen Kinder, die checken das nicht. Für die sehen alle gleich aus. [...] An der Grundschule, so vierte Klasse, geht es dann los. Mit Witzen und so was. Okay. Aber ich denk jeder hat mal so was Ähnliches durchgemacht. Fast jeder.*

18 German original: CHARLIE: *Aber ich hab auch gehört, dass manchmal so Leute an Unis halt auch nicht so tolerant sind, dass wenn du sagst du kommst aus Shanghai, denken die halt, dass man sich wichtig tut oder so was. Dass man halt Aufmerksamkeit will. Antonia hat glaub ich die Erfahrung mal gemacht. [...] Und sie hat halt erzählt wie toll Shanghai ist, vielleicht hat sie ein bisschen übertrieben, aber das ist doch normal, dass man erzählt, wie schön die Stadt ist und so. Und dann gibt es Leute, die sind halt so neidisch oder so. Das ist natürlich auch doof.*

holidays and having been there repeatedly for two months, and also the first seven years of my life. I think I will get to know Belgium anew. So I'm very much looking forward to it. New people. I'm also moving closer to my family. I will see my grandparents more often, which makes them really happy, I think. They miss us a lot, I believe.[19]

Olivia's anticipation lies in rediscovering Belgium, re-establishing old ties, and making new friends. Peter similarly hopes to find new contacts and to explore student life in his future university town. Sitting outside in the French Café, eating sandwiches, he answers my question about what he looks forward to the most very pragmatically:

PETER: *Well, for the short term, to a fridge full of Edeka [German supermarket chain] items. For the fairly long term, I also [look forward], as I said, to the city and what will come. Because it's mad how much there is coming my way. I hope to make friends in [the city] and to be accepted by the university. That all this will halfway work out. And that's the greatest happiness I hope to find right now.*[20]

Moving on offers the opportunity to indulge in things that were missed in Shanghai, as Peter's mention of German groceries illustrates; it is also connected to ending what Van Gennep ([1960]1992) described as "the liminal phase," and to being integrated into a new social world—for Peter, this process is associated with making new friends and getting accepted by the university he has applied to. Peter is aware that this is a process and hopes that, over time, "this will halfway work out."

Moving on is therefore associated with a mixture of reconnecting with old memories, places, and people, as well as an opportunity to make new friends and walk new paths, either alone for the first time, or with the help of friends and family. Antonia also sees her upcoming move as a way to escape from the sometimes restrictive expatriate bubble:

---

19 German original: OLIVIA: *Andererseits freu ich mich sehr. Ich mag Veränderung. Ich mag es wenn ich neue Leute kennenlerne, neue Kulturen kennenlerne, neue Städte, deswegen, darauf freu ich mich sehr. Ich kenn Belgien vom Urlaub und immer mal wieder da zwei Monate zu sein und meine ersten sieben Lebensjahre. Ich glaube ich werde Belgien komplett neu kennenlernen. Also doch darauf freue ich mich sehr. Neue Leute. Ich ziehe auch wieder mehr zu meiner Familie. Also meine Großeltern werde ich jetzt mehr sehen, was sie glaube ich auch total freut. Also die vermissen uns glaube ich so sehr.*

20 German original: PETER: *Also, kurzfristig erstmal auf einen Kühlschrank der voll ist mit Edeka-Artikeln. Aber langfristig eigentlich auch, wie gesagt, auf die Stadt, und eben auf was kommt. Weil das ist ja wirklich krass was vor einem liegt. Ich hoffe guten Anschluss zu kriegen in [der Stadt]. Und einen Studienplatz, dass das alles halbwegs klappt. Und das ist eigentlich das größte Glück, was ich jetzt hoffe zu finden.*

> ANTONIA: *Somehow, the time has come to get away, not only from school, but also from home, from everything, from all the people. It is time somehow to go away. It feels really great.*[21]

1.4 Reflections on leaving Shanghai and what lies ahead

All the students featured in this work see their move away from Shanghai as a crucial point in their lives and as the end of an important phase. Because leaving Shanghai is related to their graduation from high school, they have to make numerous decisions about their future, their career choices, and their new residence in particular. The young people I interviewed approach this move with mixed feelings. While some youths' parents stayed in Shanghai, others moved on to different destinations than their children. Only Olivia jointly relocated with her parents; her schoolmates' families, in contrast, are spread out across various locations, which means that from now on, these students will have to cross great distances to see their families.

My ethnographic material illustrates clearly how the collective rituals surrounding the traditional celebrations of the Abitur graduation offer a vital opportunity for students to cope as a group with these transitions: they combine the celebration of their academic achievements and the end of high school with bidding Shanghai farewell. Conversations with Matthias and a friend of Antonia, who both left the city prior to graduation and thus did not get to experience these combined rituals, suggest that this kind of closure makes moving on easier for those students who remain in Shanghai through graduation. The ceremonies, traditions, and parties that mark the end of students' school life and their time in Shanghai evolve from a mixture of German school traditions and Shanghai-specific memories. It is not surprising, therefore, that the students chose their all-time favorite club Mural, the converted warehouse with its specatcular view of the Bund, and a bar in the former French concession to commemorate their graduation as well as to say their "goodbyes" to the city.

The move away from Shanghai, which for the majority of the students means moving back to Germany, is also met with thoughts about what is to come. Final destinations are often vague until responses from universities—which are awaited with anxious anticipation—are received. For many, university life means making a dream (such as Antonia's goal of studying medicine) come true, but also evokes a fear of feeling lost in a new location. The youths particularly voiced their worries about navigat-

---

21 German original: ANTONIA: *Es ist irgendwie, es wird Zeit, dass man wegkommt. Also, nicht nur [von der] Schule, auch von zu Hause, von allem, von den Leuten. Also, es ist Zeit irgendwie, wegzukommen. Es fühlt sich echt gut an.*

ing everyday practicalities in their new home, and their reservations about whether they would be able to fit in.

The expatriate teenagers' plans to move sound rather definite. Although recent research has shown an increase in young people who move back and forth between their own and their parent's homes (for more information on what has been dubbed the "boomerang phenomenon," see Molgat 2002, 135), few of the students in this work considered returning to their parental home to be an option. This is not surprising, given that for the majority of them, the parental home was also dissolved in the next move, and is therefore not a fixed place that they can return to. Some students said they hoped to come back to Shanghai one day, but these ideas were never concretely formulated and never involved a specific plan, apart from the vague possibility of maybe receiving an expat post one day, too. While it remains to be seen whether these youths will ultimately follow in their parents' footsteps by living highly-mobile lives, the next chapter concludes this ethnography by investigating how the students fared after moving back to Germany, their new beginnings there, and their reflections on their time in Shanghai.

CHAPTER 2
New Beginnings and Concluding Thoughts

After graduation, the majority of the teenagers from the German school chose to "return" to their "home" country, which many of them only knew from early childhood or holidays, and enroll at universities. Only Kressi and Bjorn opted to stay in Shanghai to take a Chinese language course, while two other boys moved to Germany to carry out their military service and plan to attend university afterwards. The students chose Germany as a destination because of its respected and free university system, to reconnect with the country as such, and, as was mentioned previously, to explore German student life and the associated cultural practices in general. For the expatriate teenagers moving "back" also meant leaving their family homes, which by now are out of reach or no longer exist. Many of them began to pursue studies in engineering, business, or, in Antonia's case, medicine.

I keep in touch with Antonia and some of her peers and occasionally even meet with them at birthday parties, sightseeing trips, or for lunch or coffee. In our conversations I sense how much they enjoy exploring Germany, which is simultaneously a familiar, yet foreign country. Being privy to their initial struggles, but also their success and their joy in discovering new things and making new friends, I begin to realize just how complicated their "return" turns out to be.

In November 2012, I pick up Antonia at her new place to go out for lunch. Back in Shanghai we would hang out at her place, but now she does not ask me to come in, because—she apologizes—her room looks too chaotic. She is studying constantly and has no time to clean up. Besides, she admits, she still has not gotten used to doing such things yet, as her *ayi* always took care of housework. After lunch we get a coffee at Starbucks. While I am reminded of Shanghai's Starbucks coffee shops and ponder the continuity these global chains seem to provide, Antonia tells me she feels that she moved out too early, having just turned eighteen. Her parents are still in Shanghai. It is difficult for her to suddenly be on her own.

Eventually, in the summer of 2014—two years after their graduation—I conduct structured interviews with Antonia and Mia to discuss their experiences. In our follow-up interview, Antonia sits in my office and, with the voice recorder and questionnaire in front of us, she remembers her move to Germany and her initial feelings:

ANTONIA: *Moving itself went relatively, well, went really fast. I was travelling in America after graduation and then I went on a trip through Europe. And during the Europe-trip I got accepted at university. I came back and had to find a flat within one week. And then my parents came and we moved everything and so on. I didn't even think about it that much, and then university already started. […] So somehow all this went super fast.*

INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.*

ANTONIA: *Thrown in at the deep end. Erm, and the most difficult thing in the beginning wasn't being in Germany, but being alone. So moving out itself. I think that's pretty universal that you … […] Well, the first week, I remember, I had so much to do during the day. That was great. I met so many new people. And in the evenings I called Charlie or Mia and we cried together.*

INTERVIEWER: *Oh.*

ANTONIA: *<L> Because somehow we were all lonely, sad. And away from home.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*

ANTONIA: *And erm, it actually went on like that fort the whole first semester. […] Only stuyding and that was it.*

INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.*

ANTONIA: *And I also lived alone. It was also quite lonesome there. Yes. [Pause]. There was a difference between my fellow students and me: I couldn't go home on the weekends.*[22]

Although very experienced in moving, Antonia's former classmate Mia shares similar stories of loneliness during her first months in Germany. Both their narratives echo the students' retrospective accounts of what it was like to move to Shanghai that this book analyzed in Part II, Chapter 1.

22 German original: ANTONIA: *Der Umzug an sich ging relativ, also es ging halt sehr schnell. Ich war ja reisen in Amerika nach dem Abitur und dann war ich ja noch auf Europareise. Und auf der Europareise habe ich die Zusage für die Uni bekommen. Kam zurück und hab dann innerhalb von einer Woche eine Wohnung gesucht. Dann kamen meine Eltern, dann haben wir halt den Umzug gemacht und so weiter. Gar nicht viel drüber nachgedacht, dann fing schon die Uni an. […] Also irgendwie ging das alles so super schnell.* INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.* ANTONIA: *Voll reingeworfen, voll reingestürzt. Ehm, und ich glaub am Anfang war das Schwierigste nicht so, dass ich jetzt in Deutschland bin, sondern dass ich alleine bin. Also, das Ausziehen an sich. Also ich glaube das ist ziemlich universell, dass man dann halt … […] Also, die erste Woche, das weiß ich noch, also ich hatte tagsüber megaviel zu tun. Das war voll schön. Ich hab ganz viele neue Leute kennengelernt. Und abends habe ich Charlie oder Mia angerufen und mit denen geheult.* INTERVIEWER: *Oh.* ANTONIA: *<L> Weil einfach irgendwie so, alle irgendwie einsam waren, traurig waren. Und weg waren von zu Hause.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* ANTONIA: *Und, ehm, das ging halt das ganze erste Semester eigentlich so. […] Also es war auch alles überschattet, so von der Uni. […] Also nur lernen und das wars.* INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.* ANTONIA: *Und ich hab auch alleine gewohnt. Da war es auch ziemlich einsam. Ja. [Pause] Was ein Unterschied war, von mir zu meinen Kommilitonen, dass ich halt nicht am Wochenende nach Hause fahren konnte.*

However, there is a significant difference: in 2012, Antonia and Mia decided themselves to move to Germany for their studies, while years earlier, many of the teenagers had not only felt disregarded in their family's decision-making process to move to China but had often been reluctant, or initially even against the idea of going abroad.

Faced with the family's relocation, the children were caught between the desire to stay with their peers and the wish to be with their parents. They were actively weighing their parents' and their own interests. While the possibilities to explore new things with their family were exciting, they also feared the unpredictable experiences of moving to a new, unknown city. Many students therefore recalled having angrily confronted their parents, urging them to forgo the move. Other students said that their parents felt guilty for moving them out of their familiar environment, against their choice. Consequently, the move to Shanghai brought with it emotional challenges. This process was analysed in Part II, Chapter 2 as "culture shock:" students' reactions to an unfamiliar urban environment, new sensorial experiences combined with the lack of friends and extended family, and problems within the family related to the move.

MAKING A HOME AGAIN

Students' everyday practices upon arrival in Shanghai were primarily concerned with making Shanghai their new home and with becoming part of a new community, as I described in Part III, Chapter 1, which conveyed the continuous process of making sense of the city, not only in terms of navigation and sensory experience, but also in terms of positioning oneself within it—as consumers, inhabitants, or someone overwhelmed by the urban, sensorial landscape of Shanghai. Managing the city meant managing everyday life and the migration experience, for instance by learning how to navigate between spaces of everyday practices and consumption, by giving spaces a social meaning, or by dividing Shanghai into manageable, familiar areas and "the rest of the city." In these analyses practices of a retreat into familiarity already became apparent. Part III, Chapter 2 was concerned with notions of home. After providing a description of expatriate housing spaces—gated communities—it identified youths' small-scale home-making practices, such as decorating their rooms, or having regular family dinners, as well as larger processes of locating "home(s)" in their transnational networks. It demonstrated that, due to the expatriate teenagers' experiences of mobility, home was thought of as multiple and fluid, and tied to various places, items, and people. It became evident that making and (re)imagining homes, and collecting things to produce a sense of belonging helped the teenagers to cope with feelings of loneliness and enable the rhizomatic home to "start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 9).

For Mia, who moved with her family several times within Asia and between Asia and Germany, this (re)imagining and creating a home in Shanghai, as Part III, Chapter 2 showcased, also included family routines. She had always considered her immediate family and the shared domestic life as the main ingredient for her feelings of being at home.

Coming back to Germany after graduation is Mia's first move without immediate family:

MIA: *Well, I've moved many times, but when I came home, my parents and siblings were always there and asked: "How are you? How was it?" And here I came home to empty rooms.*

INTERVIEWER: *Oh.*

MIA: *And erm, yes, that really wasn't nice. [...] As soon as I went out, it wasn't a problem at all. I knew what it was like to be new. But, as I said, coming home felt somehow, felt really strange.*[23]

Furthermore, for Mia and her friends, the move to Germany is not only a first step of being on their own, but also a move out of the supportive expatriate "bubble." Throughout their stay in Shanghai, the youths were surrounded by a community that shared experiences of moving. The international youths' resulting perceptions of Shanghai as a space of transit (see Introduction) were accompanied by feelings of belonging to an expatriate community that shared spatial and social practices and maintained various collective ways of managing migration processes.

SHANGHAI'S EXPAT COMMUNITY AND ITS SUPPORT

A central role in this community is played by international schools, as described in Part III, Chapter 3, which are sites for the continuous everyday routine for expatriate youths, as well as a place for meeting new friends. There, collective expatriate identities were negotiated and mediated on an everyday basis—through community events, the communal valuing of the school for the youths' (cosmopolitan) formation, and through the admission process that required the "right" financial means or jobs, the "right" passports, and the "right" grades. Chinese nationals could only enroll in rare exceptions. Hence the schools brought together students from various international backgrounds, but—as with the gated communities

23 German original: MIA: *Also, ich bin ja so oft umgezogen, aber wenn ich nach Hause gekommen bin, waren halt immer meine Eltern da und meine Geschwister und haben mich halt gefragt: „Ja wie geht's dir? Wie war's?" Und so kam man dann nach Hause und einen haben halt so leere Zimmer empfangen.* INTERVIEWER: *Oh.* MIA: *Und ehm, ja das war irgendwie echt nicht so schön. [...] Sobald ich unterwegs war, war's überhaupt nicht das Problem. Das kannte ich ja, ich wusste wie es ist, neu zu sein. Aber, wie gesagt dieses Nach-Hause-Kommen fand ich irgendwie, fand ich ganz komisch.*

described in Part II, Chapter 2—this diversity was highly controlled. The schools also offered parents an entrance to Shanghai's expatria and fostered the development of a sense of community for many of the students and their families.

In Germany, Antonia describes how she now experiences how difficult it can be to discuss the experience of moving and of growing up in Shanghai outside of this community.

ANTONIA: *Yes. And I notice now that, in the beginning, I talked so much about Shanghai. I don't do that anymore.*

INTERVIEWER: *<L>*

ANTONIA: *Erm, [I did that] so much that my new friends here were annoyed, I believe. The people I just got to know here. Because the people […] who are just getting to know me, they don't think that I come from abroad. […] I don't look like it and I don't talk like it. And I'm not from there. That there are differences for me, somehow, I've always tried to stress that in the beginning. Because they didn't understand it, although I always said that I'm from Shanghai. For example […] my flatmate, for her that was completely, she couldn't imagine that. "What do you mean Shanghai?" And then she just ignored that.*

INTERVIEWER: *Like you were there simply on a holiday? <L>*

ANTONIA: *They just didn't realize that I come from a different country. And then I emphasized it so much until they were all annoyed. Because it is so unthinkable. Because it isn't really Chinese, because it was such a strange society in which we lived in Shanghai. So I always tried to describe […] what it was like. Because they don't understand what it was like. Well. I somehow tried to explain the differences and the commonalities and so on, I tried to explain myself.*[24]

24 German original: ANTONIA: *Ja. Und was mir jetzt auch noch auffällt, ist dass ich am Anfang sehr viel von Shanghai geredet habe. Also das mache ich jetzt nicht mehr.* INTERVIEWER: *<L>* ANTONIA: *Ehm, so viel, dass es meine neuen Freunde hier glaube ich auch genervt hat. Also die Leute, die ich neu kennengelernt hab. Weil, also die Leute […], die mich gerade kennenlernen, die kommen nicht auf die Idee, dass ich aus dem Ausland komme. […] Ich sehe ja nicht so aus, und ich rede ja auch nicht so. Und komme halt auch nicht daher. Dass es da Unterschiede für mich gibt, irgendwie, habe ich das anfangs immer versucht zu betonen, weil die es nicht verstanden haben, auch wenn ich immer gesagt habe: „Ich bin aus Shanghai." Also zum Beispiel […] meine Mitbewohnerin, das war für sie total, das konnte sie sich gar nicht vorstellen. „Was, wie Shanghai?" Und dann hat sie das einfach so, ignoriert.* INTERVIEWER: *Wie nach dem Motto: „Da warst du mal im Urlaub?" <L>* ANTONIA: *Das haben die einfach nicht realisiert, dass ich aus einem anderen Land komme. Und dann habe ich das so lange betont, bis ich die alle genervt habe. Weil es auch so unvorstellbar ist also. Weil es ja auch nicht richtig chinesisch ist, weil das war ja so eine komische Gesellschaft in der wir in Shanghai gelebt haben. Das habe ich auch immer versucht zu beschreiben wie es war. Weil die einfach nicht verstehen wie es war. Also. Dass ich irgendwie versucht habe […] die Unterschiede und die Gemeinsamkeiten und so weiter, dass ich versucht habe mich zu erklären.*

For Mia and Antonia returning to Germany meant leaving the expatriate world and the supportive environment of friends—who all shared their experiences—behind. Now in Germany, Mia realizes that these shared experiences also influenced her ways of forming friendships, as her comparison to her new social circle in Germany shows:

> MIA: *Yes, I also found friends for sure, good friends, and, erm, you do a lot together. It's actually constant and everywhere, but at the same time the friendships are, well it's different […]. It all takes more time, somehow.*
>
> INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.*
>
> MIA: *Until you, erm, feel that you know each other well. That didn't go that fast. Because in Shanghai it was always like, everyone knew what it was like to be new.*
>
> INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*
>
> MIA: *And erm, everyone was new at one point. […] There was constant change, erm, so everyone knew how it works to make friends fast, because you knew, okay, if you take two years to make close friends, then that person will already be gone again. […] So the whole thing somehow worked faster. […] While here it is like, […], well sure, everyone is looking for new people in the beginning, […] because you just don't know anyone […]. That's why you do find new people quite fast, but it's not like you're close and intimate [like in Shanghai]. Because everyone comes from different backgrounds, different, erm, situations, experienced different things. Although everyone is quite open with one another, it's […] difficult, it takes more time. I really don't know how to describe it, but […] it is just not that intimate so quickly.*[25]

25 German original: MIA: *Ja und ich hab auch auf jeden Fall Freunde, also gute Freunde gefunden, und ehm, man macht dann auch viel, es ist eigentlich wie immer und überall, aber gleichzeitig sind die Freundschaften halt doch irgendwie, also es ist anders […].. Es dauert alles irgendwie länger.* INTERVIEWER: *Hmm.* MIA: *Bis man, ehm, das Gefühl hat […], dass man sich besser kennt. Das ging nicht so schnell. Weil halt einfach in Shanghai immer dieses Ding war, jeder weiß wie es ist, neu zu sein.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* MIA: *Und ehm, jeder war mal neu. […] Es war ja sowieso so ein konstanter Wechsel, und ehm, dadurch wusste man irgendwie, wie es geht, Freundschaften schneller zu schließen, weil man genau wusste, okay, wenn du jetzt erst mal zwei Jahre brauchst, bis du gut befreundet bist, dann ist die Person ja schon wieder weg. […] Das Ganze ging dann irgendwie schneller. […] Während hier ist es so, […] im Endeffekt sucht am Anfang jeder ja auch nach neuen Leuten, weil, […] man kennt ja niemanden. […] Deswegen ist es dann schon so, dass, ehm, man da schnell Leute findet, aber es ist halt nicht so schnell, so, so eng und vertraut [wie in Shanghai]. Weil irgendwie kommen doch alle aus anderen Verhältnissen, und aus anderen ehm, Situationen, haben verschiedene Dinge erlebt […]. Auch wenn dann alle offen zueinander sind, ist es trotzdem so, dass es […] irgendwie schwierig ist, dass [es] dann länger dauert. Ich weiß überhaupt nicht wirklich, wie ich das beschreiben soll, aber es ist halt […] nicht so schnell so vertraut.*

Mia explains how forming new acquaintances and friends in Germany cannot offer strategies for dealing with high mobility and being new. Friendships take longer to form. From her time in the transit space of Shanghai, however, Mia and the other expatriate youths learned how to come to terms with initially unknown surroundings: by finding new things to do.

EXPLORING ACTIVITIES AND SPACES

In Shanghai, students like Antonia and Mia actively sought out and claimed their own spaces outside the gated communities and schools, which determined most of their everyday routines. Constructing collective age identities and exploring related spaces were crucial for the teenagers to gain meaning and agency in their migration experience, as was shown in Part IV, Chapter 2 on nightlife and Part IV, Chapter 3 on the hangout spot called "the shop."

To make a new home at university in Germany, Mia and Antonia apply this eagerness to explore new spaces and activities. Antonia, for instance, learned how to play the German card game Skat with her new fellow students and taught herself vegan cooking and baking. These activities also include reviving or strengthening old memories, habits, or ties to old friends or extended family in Germany. Food and family are aspects that occasionally evoke feelings of "return" and continuity mainly because these were also practiced as part of the rhizomatic home during the students' time in Shanghai and elsewhere (see Part III, Chapter 2).

FEELING OR LOOKING FOREIGN

During their first few months in Germany, Antonia and Mia also come to terms with the incongruity of not being recognizably foreign at first sight, while often feeling alien. When Mia and I meet in early summer 2013—almost a year after her move—she talks about everyday incidents where she has to ask for help or information, for instance buying tram or train tickets, and feels local citizens are annoyed and do not understand how she could possibly not know these things. Other students share her experiences. Her former schoolmate Andrea remembers feeling awkward at the post office for not knowing the different forms or courier services available in Germany, and for later having to ask a friend where to put the address on the envelope. Students experience that the people in their new surroundings expect them to know these things, simply because they look German and speak the language fluently. Such stories juxtapose students' experiences of otherness in Shanghai, which I highlighted in Part IV, Chapter 4. In China, these white expatriate youths consciously experienced their physical difference as whites—many for the first time. This new and often uncomfortable feeling of difference promoted a preference for locations in

Shanghai that were predominantly occupied by other whites. Many of their spatial practices therefore led to accepting or strengthening the exclusion of “China” from their everyday lives. Accompanied by special (and often preferential) treatment from Chinese citizens and a lack of interaction with Chinese youths, their foreign appearance fuelled their feelings of merely being “guests” in China. The new narratives of being not recognizably foreign in Germany can hence also be understood as a loss of the special—often experienced as privileged—treatment they received in Shanghai.

Antonia and Mia’s reflections on their time in Shanghai and how they think it influenced them warrants a return to this ethnography’s initial questions that I raised in the Introduction: what are the experiences and consequences of growing up on the move? To reach a differentiated answer to this complex and difficult question, the theoretical foundations on which this study is built favor transcultural theories and their application to ethnographic research on privileged migrant youths, challenging the simplistic concept of TCKs that, for some time, was the common approach to categorizing youths like those that inform this work.

THE ROLE OF AGE IN THE YOUTHS’ OWN PERSPECTIVES, DEPENDENCY, AND AGENCY

My first research aim was to understand the youths’ own perspectives on global mobility. Although teenagers experienced their move to Shanghai in many ways similar to the adult community, there was also a range of different, age-specific experiences.

The students were minors whose move depended (solely) on the decisions of their parents. Their memories of leaving, examined in Part II, showed that students’ dependence on their family and their lack of choice was always clear to them. Furthermore, their prescribed everyday school lives left little time and space for the expression of individual agency. Because they regularly shared spaces—for example the international schools (see Part III, Chapter 3)—with peers of the same age and with similar experiences, collective forms of coping with the move and the new environment could be forged. Together, students developed a social space distinct from the adult community. The teenagers claimed and frequented a variety of social meeting places including Shanghai’s nightclubs, or spaces that lay in-between different social worlds and authorities, such as the hangout place called “the shop.” Collectively exploring and shaping these spaces proved to be age-specific ways of managing the move while still remaining in a relationship of dependency from parents. Furthermore, youths—constantly confronted with the idea of development, of becoming an adult—seemed to reflect more than adults on the impact that moving and living in several places had on them and how this shaped their points of view and future. These reflections illustrate the second point of my investigation, the expatriate youths’ negotiations of identity.

IDENTITY NEGOTIATIONS: DEMARCATION AND GLOBALITY VERSUS TRANSCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

The youths' own perspectives illustrated throughout this ethnography, for instance in Part I, Chapter 4, show that common notions of home, belonging, or cultural identity are too limited to capture the complexities of their childhoods abroad. Expatriate youths live in a highly mobile and culturally complex environment and the teenagers found myriad ways to negotiate, forge, perform, and contest their forms of belonging and positions in their social worlds. My ethnographic work examined these ways and revealed two seemingly contradictory tendencies in their everyday practices. On the one hand, there are those daily activities and ways of living that maintain rigid cultural and class divisions, often tied to a wish for comfort and continuity, but also to feelings of superiority and hopes for status creation and future benefits; on the other hand, there are practices informed by curiosity and self-reflexivity allowing and fostering the emergence of transcultural perspectives.

These first practices of demarcation and distinction became very apparent in the youths' spatial divisions of the city into expat and non-expat places as described in Part III, Chapter 1, which are also succinctly illustrated in the students' mental maps (such as in Figure 8). These practices are also evident in the absence of friendships or even contact with Chinese youths (see Part IV, Chapter 4). This lack of exchange with local teenagers—or local citizens in general—is fostered by the withdrawal into gated communities with a high percentage of foreigners (see Part III, Chapter 2) as well as by the fact that international schools are not allowed to take in Chinese students due to prohibitive rules by the Chinese government (see Part III, Chapter 3). Engaged in practices of demarcation from the local environment, the young privileged migrants, nevertheless, claimed urban and cosmopolitan identities. My study shows that for expatriate youths, as Hindman (2009a, 250) observed of adult expatriates in Nepal, "culture is important as a means of justifying their presence abroad," but difference is often only allowed in a prescribed, safe "niche" and in a "commodifiable form" (ibid., 267). Similar to Brosius' (2010) investigation of the everyday lives of India's middle class, such cosmopolitanism can be seen as "a practice of status-creation" (2010, 26). Shanghai's urban environment often only provides the backdrop for learning and claiming cosmopolitanism or expatriateness. The skills acquired through the experiences in Shanghai bring status and competencies or, as Binder (2005) calls it, "globality," to the youths. This globality must be seen as a cultural resource in the Bourdieusian sense—as capital. The ways in which students imagine their future careers proved this particularly well. Growing up abroad and receiving an international education are considered by expatriate students (see Part III, Chapter 3) and the community—as the graduation speech held by the principle of the German school illustrated in the previous chapter—to be clear benefits of global mobility. In Shanghai, the international schools

consider providing, fostering, and ultimately transforming their students' global experiences into globality and capital, to be part of their educational duties. Globality is a community marker and value. However, while international schools foster an international community that sees itself as open-minded, diverse, and cosmopolitan, they do so without including the local neighborhood, Shanghai, or China as a whole. While expatriate youths and their families create their own communities, often revolving around these schools, they demarcate themselves from Shanghai "locals" as well as from those back "home"—both are perceived as lacking international experience. The performance of a collective expatriate identity is thus not only tied to aspiring to and learning cosmopolitan values, but simultaneously connected to practices of demarcation from "others" perceived as less mobile, globally connected, and educated.

Nevertheless, looking at these processes, the age-specific context has to be kept in mind: parents play the major role in planning their children's lives and making decisions in their "best interest" (see Ackers and Stalford 2004; Hutchins 2011), as exemplified in youths' retrospectives on leaving in Part II, Chapter 1.

In my view, many "expatriates' places" in Shanghai were not spaces that particularly fostered the process of transculturation because transculturation means a process of allowing space for difference (Hoerder, Hébert, and Schmitt 2005), rather than leaving difference outside the walls, putting it in a "niche," or staging it at as the "other." These demarcation processes, which circumscribe so much of the teenagers' lives in Shanghai, could render the application of the term "transcultural" to the accumulation of experiences that I identified as globality far-fetched. After all, "transculturation is the process of individuals and societies changing themselves by integrating diverse cultural life-ways into dynamic new ones" (Hoerder, Hébert, and Schmitt 2005, 13).

However, my ethnography revealed that the young migrants' activities and viewpoints were significantly informed by curiosity and self-reflexivity, thus allowing and fostering the emergence of transcultural perspectives. When spending time with youths and listening to their subjective experiences of their transient stays in Shanghai, I encountered many reflections that were concerned with culturally complex entanglements, experiences, and challenges that forced these teenagers to position themselves in a world that others often culturally divide for them. These subjective experiences of in-between positions linked to processes of transculturation complicated and challenged the focus on demarcation and status-gain that I had witnessed and which other studies on expatriates have focused on. The examined processes of identity positioning and the meaning of the stay for different expatriate teenagers, as highlighted in Part I, Chapter 4, as well as their fluid, translocal, and multiple conceptions of home and belonging, as analyzed in Part III, Chapter 2, showed that the generation of expatriate teenagers that I worked with was often forced to negotiate difference, regardless of how hermetic the expat "bubble" may have seemed.

In contrast to their parents, some children lacked a deep understanding of their "home culture," since some of them had only been born in their "home country" but left it at a very early age; others only knew "their" country from the occasional holiday spent there with family. Furthermore, many of the youths came from mixed marriages or were second generation migrants who had become mobile again and "returned" to China for a certain period. Many of the expatriate teenagers I met therefore had to find ways to bridge differences between parents, or school and parents, on a daily basis, and from an early age. Additionally, being in China provoked reflections on social practices and shared values. Some students, like Karina, who after her stay chose to major in Chinese at college, or those like Antonia, Charlie, Don, or Arnaud, who had Chinese family backgrounds, continuously reflected upon their own "Chineseness." In short, the specificity of China mattered.

Furthermore, the move's impact on relationship networks—such as being away from extended family and friends—triggered all the students to think about themselves, their cultural identities, and what was important for them to feel at home. Some reflected on cultural or educational influences (see for example Paul's thoughts in the Introduction, or those of Antonia, Xia, and Arnaud in Part IV, Chapter 1), while others considered mostly class and their expatriate status (see Bjorn's comments, also in Part IV, Chapter 1). While my influence as an ethnographer cannot be denied, these findings resonate with Melissa Butcher's description of Australian transnational professionals and their experiences in Asia: "Transnational movement subsequently engenders a process of identity re-evaluation as mobility, and inevitable contact with difference, disrupt the familiar cultural frames of reference that underpin identities, including established relationship networks" (Butcher 2009, 1354).

My ethnography, therefore, recognizes the students' emerging abilities to cope with changes and difference as part of the development of a transcultural perspective. It is this transcultural perspective that enabled them to reflect upon their culturally complex environment and its meanings for and influences on their own positions and narratives of the self. These transcultural perspectives functioned as tools to re-find spaces and moments of comfort in diverse and mobile cultural contexts, whether at an American or German school, an expatriate nightlife location, at Chinese grandparents' homes, or in mixed-marriage family life.

SPATIAL PRACTICES AND EMPLACED EXPERIENCES

My third research aim was to analyze expatriate youths' everyday spatial practices and their (dis)engagement with the "local." Dynamic relations between spatial boundaries, their transgressions, and the claiming of expatriate and age identities were brought sharply to the fore in my examination of students' everyday practices of social space. Youths in Shanghai

experienced less spatial and social constraints than youths in Europe, particularly regarding access to restaurants, bars, and nightclubs (see Part IV). Despite this relative sense of freedom, Shanghai students experienced most of the everyday spaces they frequented as highly regulated due to the strict processes of demarcation that the expatriate community undertook to define for itself; examples are the spaces of the gated communities and the international schools (Part III).

Students' practices in these spaces were diverse and contradictory. Looking at "diaspora space" (Brah 1996) in Shanghai—the encounters and moments of entanglement between the privileged migrants and those who stayed in Shanghai—it became clear that a strong local-expat divide was maintained, making the transgressions difficult for expatriate teenagers in general. Only a few locations, like the shop, provided a shared space for locals and expat youths. But while the shop played a central role, it is set outside the glamorous image of the metropolis, and it is this image, rather than any direct, unregulated involvement with its actual inhabitants and spaces, that led to students' identifications with Shanghai. Nevertheless, the teenagers' turning towards the city's transnational spaces and aiming to be part of the city's cosmopolitan image still professes, at least to some extent, their engagement with the contemporary situation in China's megalopolis. The relationship between expatriate youths and their physical environment shapes their everyday lives as much as the expatriate networks that they belong to. Their interaction with their immediate surroundings offers a way to not only cope with the difficulties of the overall migration experience, but also to represent this experience as worthwhile and successful. Shanghai's urban environment provided students with the backdrop for learning and claiming certain forms of cosmopolitan identity that I have identified specifically as "expatriateness" (see Part III, Chapter 3).

RETURNING TO WHERE?

Although Shanghai is an exciting city, the majority of the teenagers from the German school chose to "return" to their "home" country, which many of them only knew from early childhood or holidays. However, as Antonia and Mia's accounts show, there is no simple homecoming to a certain, stable status quo. The idea of "home," as I argue throughout this ethnography, is a complicated matter and is tied to various emotions and places. Home is also a matter of perspective.

Two years after leaving China, the idea of "return," for Mia and Antonia, is becoming linked to Shanghai: the city is still a connecting place in their friendships to which they frequently retreat—imagined, virtually, or physically—to strengthen their ties and to find emotional support. During an interview in the summer of 2014, Mia and I are sitting in her room in a shared student flat and I inquire about her current relationship to Shanghai. Mia explains when and how she and her friends remember the city:

MIA: *When, for example, I'm in contact with Antonia, Charlie, and so on, that is a group in which everyone has very strong ties to Shanghai. [...] Because we all lived there for such a long time, and were together in this group, we all were always so, we completely hyped it. [...].*

INTERVIEWER: *<L>*

MIA: *That we keep saying: "Oh, we want to go back and everything was so great." [...] A few of them still have parents who live there, so they are there quite often. [...] And then you talk a lot about it, you send photos back and forth, and that's why, at these times, when someone is visiting, it is particularly strong. But we generally talk a lot about it.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*

MIA: *Yes, especially when we see each other. It's, I don't know ... Did Antonia show you the poem I wrote?*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes. Yes.*

MIA: *I wrote these [lines] about, well, how we drink to a city that we love, and that is somehow ...*

INTERVIEWER: *It really made me think of concrete situations in which we actually did that.*

MIA: *True, and it is always like that when we see each other. [...] In that respect, there is certainly a very strong connection. [...] I often look at old pictures, but at the same time that somehow depresses me a bit. I don't know, it's always like, I am simply homesick. [...] I think about it a lot, and I have many things in my room that remind me of it. [...] When you drink tea, you drink it out of a Shanghai Starbucks mug. [...] This kind of connection is always there, really, pretty much every day. But of course it is sometimes stronger and sometimes weaker. But, erm, for example if you, if friends who still live there, if they post pictures, then you're always like, "oh, how beautiful," and then I really enjoy looking at these. Also from people who I don't know, or only vaguely.*

INTERVIEWER: *Yes.*

MIA: *And then, if you follow them on Instagram, and then you see, "ah, didn't they post a nice picture of the skyline." [...] I really like looking at those.*

INTERVIEWER: *<L>*

MIA: *Yes, I simply enjoyed living there, and it's just simply, you don't forget that right away.*[26]

---

26 German original: MIA: *Wenn ich zum Beispiel mit Antonia, Charlie und so weiter Kontakt hab, das ist ja total so 'ne ganze Gruppe wo wir alle 'nen sehr starken Shanghai-Bezug haben. [...] Dadurch dass wir da alle so lange gelebt haben und in dieser Konstellation so zusammen waren, waren wir alle auch immer so, dass wir das einfach total gehypt haben [...].* INTERVIEWER: *<L>* MIA: *Also, dass wir halt immer sagen: „Oh, wir möchten zurück und es war alles so toll." [...] Von ein paar von denen*

To former expatriate youths "returning" is a practice of remembering and reviving old connections while simultaneously establishing new ones and exploring new places, rather than moving back to a fixed geographical location or network.

Despite a "return" to Germany, their lives are still characterized by ties to diverse locations and by global mobility. Consequently, although feelings of belonging to the new environment are being established, they are often also experienced as contested. For expatriate youths spaces of "home" and notions of "return" also remain extremely mobile—or perhaps especially after leaving the transit space of Shanghai and moving to those countries that issued their passports.

MY PERSONAL STANCE

The narratives of the teenagers' experience as they passed through Shanghai have often touched me. Their simultaneous ignorance, acceptance, and unwarranted transgressions of cultural boundaries at times irritated me, and their occasional lack of interest in Chinese society shocked me. Their attempts and abilities to cope with constant change and difference impressed me, and their honest reflections upon and willingness to share their own lives enlightened me. To capture their positions, which are on the one hand marked by privilege, and on the other by extreme dependence and painful uprootings, was a personal and academic challenge; as I have shown, the characteristics and the varieties of teenagers' experiences of privileged migration are very diverse. But all these youths considered

---

wohnen ja noch die Eltern da, das heißt die sind dann auch öfter da. […] Und dann redet man ja auch viel darüber, und dann schickt man Fotos hin und her, und deswegen, also zu den Zeiten ist es immer besonders stark, wenn halt da grade jemand zu Besuch ist. Aber auch sonst reden wir schon viel darüber. INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* MIA: *Ja oder besonders auch wenn wir uns sehen. Also es ist, ich weiss nicht, hatte Antonia dir eigentlich dieses Gedicht gezeigt, was ich geschrieben hatte?* INTERVIEWER: *Ja, ja.* MIA: *Ja, und da hatt ich ja auch diese [Zeilen] geschrieben von wegen, ja wir trinken auf eine Stadt die wir lieben, so ein bisschen, und das ist halt auch irgendwie …* INTERVIEWER: *Da musste ich auch wirklich an so konkrete Situationen denken, wo wir das gemacht haben.* MIA: *Genau, und so ist es halt immer, wenn wir uns sehen. […] Also in der Hinsicht ist auf jeden Fall ein sehr starker Bezug da. […] Ich kuck mir halt auch wirklich sehr oft alte Bilder an, aber gleichzeitig deprimiert mich das auch irgendwie so ein bisschen. Ich weiß nicht, das ist immer so, es ist halt einfach Heimweh dann […]. Ich denke viel darüber nach und ich hab ja auch viele Sachen in meinem Zimmer die mich irgendwie daran erinnern […]. Wenn man Tee trinkt, trinkt man halt aus so 'ner Shanghai Starbucks-Tasse. […] Also so ein Bezug ist auf jeden Fall immer da, also wirklich auch jeden Tag. […] Aber natürlich ist es mal mehr, mal weniger. Aber ehm, zum Beispiel auch wenn man dann von Freunden die da noch wohnen, wenn die dann Fotos posten, dann ist man immer so: „Aah, wie schön," und das kuck ich mir dann auch wirklich gern an. Oder von Leuten die ich dann nicht kenne, sondern nur um zwei Ecken.* INTERVIEWER: *Ja.* MIA: *Wenn du dann irgendwie auf Instagram denen folgen kannst, und dann siehst du, „Ach was haben die nicht wieder für ein schönes Foto von der Skyline gepostet." […] So was kuck ich mir schon echt gerne an.* INTERVIEWER: <*L*> MIA: *[…] Ja ich hab da einfach gerne gewohnt, und dann ist das dann so, dass man das nicht so schnell vergisst.*

passing through Shanghai a chance to gain a new outlook. It remains to be seen if, in time, these transcultural perspectives will manifest themselves either in rigid identity positions that claim cosmopolitanism or globality solely for themselves (see my argumentation against the concept of TCKs in the Introduction), or if they will instead be able to keep their flexibility and creative ways of incorporating difference.

It is beyond the aim of this ethnography to make concrete recommendations on extended family stays abroad, but the stories in this book suggest—at least to me—that it is wise to involve children in the decision-making process and, once the decision is made, in the preparations for the move. Furthermore, while it is important to create a familiar comfort zone, parents can also set an example of how to engage with new environments by not simply withdrawing into "bubbles." I am convinced that open-mindedness and a shared eagerness to explore can help all family members make their stay more meaningful than the advancement of the breadwinner's career alone ever could. Such an attitude can support children in forging new experiences into self-reflective transcultural perspectives that are based on an empathy for and appreciation of differences, and to help overcome the rigid divisions of nationality, gender, class, or ethnicity that are still present in all our lives.

FUTURE STUDIES

Many questions remain unanswered. I want to address four points that are worth, even crucial to, exploration in further research.

First, now that I have traced the "here-and-now" (Bucholtz 2002, 532) of students' migration experiences, their future paths could be explored. A longitudinal approach is necessary to trace the impact of growing up on the move on their future careers and lifestyle choices. The influence of the teenager's social situations on their educational and career trajectories has long been caught in a conundrum of structure versus agency (Milner 2004, 15–17). As suggested earlier, following the ways in which expatriate children, such as my informants, exercise their privileged upbringing and what kind of rigid or mobile subjectivities they would choose to keep as identity references will be a worthwhile endeavour.

Second, I agree with Fechter and Walsh (2010, 1207), who point to the need to "produce research that does engage with locals' perspectives on expatriates in a variety of contexts." For studies looking at expatriates in China, this means we need a focus on Chinese locals' points of view on expatriates to flesh out issues such as demarcations between the communities and the lack of contact between locals and expatriates, or to investigate the complex dynamics of race in everyday life in China.

Third, the question of what role China specifically played in the students' development remains partly unanswered and also constitutes a significant concern for further research on the topic of expatriate youths.

To address this concern meaningfully, comparative research on expatriate youths' experiences in other locations is needed. Although Chinese or Shanghainese particularities have been pointed out in the present study, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the "host" country influenced the age-specific experience of these privileged migrants. While the practices of demarcation and boundary drawing, for instance, seem to be very similar to those adult expatriate communities—whether in Jakarta (Fechter 2007a; Fechter 2007b), Dubai (Walsh 2006a; Walsh 2006b; Walsh 2008; Walsh 2011), Singapore (Beaverstock 2002; Beaverstock 2011), Nepal (Hindman 2009a; Hindman 2009b), Hong Kong (Yeoh and Willis 2005; Willis and Yeoh 2008), Sao Paulo (Dobeneck 2010), or Saudi Arabia (Glasze 2006)—the youths' experiences can vary greatly in respect to the schools they attend. Different school systems and the enrollment of local students in other countries could make mixing with "local" youths easier elsewhere than it is in Shanghai where the spaces to interact are particularly limited.

Lastly, a study that brings together experiences of privileged and less privileged forms of youth migration would undoubtedly yield important insights into children's strategies of coping with family migration generally. Combining these research fields, which until now have been approached separately, can, for example, highlight the challenges, but also the strengths and capabilities of young migrants from less privileged backgrounds, who are often marginalized because of their circumstances and whose skills often remain unacknowledged. The longing for continuity and reminders of "home" that expatriate youths experience can provide a much-needed bridge to understanding practices of migration that are perceived as foreign or not adapted enough—something which politicians or media in western societies tend to dismiss as leading towards a "parallel society." In this context, combined research into the various forms of youth migration can elucidate the important role played by institutional support, for example from schools.

The teenagers I accompanied were privileged in many ways and their advantaged positions, which allowed them to compensate for the losses and anxieties that moving brought with it, are in stark, even shocking contrast to the hundreds of thousands of refugees that are currently seeking asylum in Europe. Comparing these different circumstances, along with the agency that children and teenagers can develop by coming to terms with them, could inform policies and services that help migrant children and youths with the challenges they have to face. The resulting insights could contribute to establishing adequate assistance at schools and community centers and to creating shared spaces that encourage self-reflection and the development of the transcultural perspectives needed to manage the consequences of global mobility.

Appendix

Appendix A: Transcription Key

ABBREVIATIONS

<L>	Laughing
<L> word or phrase said while laughing </L>	Laughing while speaking
<x>	Inaudible
Regular text	Strong emphasis by speaker

Full stops and commas were set according to the rhythm of speech. Fillers and non-lexical utterances were preserved in the original and the translations. All original interviews were translated by the author.

Appendix B: Student Directory: Who's Who?

Only those youths whose interview quotes are directly cited in the ethnography are listed here. I interviewed more students, for example from a Singaporean school, whose experiences inform my work, but as they do not appear as individuals in the book, I decided not to provide their background information.

Alex, age eighteen, was the oldest boy in the German class I visited. I interviewed Alex together with Don and Bjorn. Alex enjoyed the attention he received during the interview, which initially he equated with a journalistic interview, suggesting an impression of fame or importance. Alex was born in Germany, but later moved to Brussels with his family. After living in Brussels (where Alex attended a German school) for a few years, his parents decided to move to Shanghai for the advancement of his father's career. Alex came to Shanghai when he was almost seventeen years old. Alex, along with his best friend Don ("the girls" labeled their relationship a "bromance"), was always very involved in nightlife activities and often initiated the Friday nights out. "The boys" hung out at his place quite regularly. Alex was the only boy who had casual relationships with Chinese girls he met at the nightclubs. Alex moved back to Germany after graduation and is currently studying film.

Allen, an American, was eleven years old when I interviewed him at his British school in November, 2010. He had just arrived in Shanghai: his father had been transferred to China for work three months prior. Before his move to Shanghai, his family had spent over a year in Mexico, leaving early, however, due to what Allen referred to as "security reasons." Allen phrased every thought carefully, which, along with his school uniform (sports coat, shirt, and a tie) and his way of quietly reading while waiting for his classmates Jacob and Tamara to appear for the group interview, made him seem rather grown up. Although sharing his thoughts on moving to Shanghai in a very reflective and circumspect way, his position seemed to be one of copying his parents' stance of maintaining a positive attitude and focusing on the benefits of growing up transnationally. He emphasised that he thinks this approach is important refused to discuss any uncertainties, difficulties, or homesickness he might have felt. Instead, he stressed that he trusts his parents and their decision-making process. However, he recalled that he had gotten sick in Mexico and attributed this to the radical change of environment and the host of new impressions he was exposed to. Allen, in his analytical and calm way, embodied what I have often experienced as a typically American attitude of looking at the positive aspects

of a situation. Yet he was someone I kept wondering about because I was curious as to what really lay behind his positive attitude and whether his strategy really worked. Unfortunately, I was not able to stay in touch with Allen after leaving Shanghai.

Andrea, aged sixteen at our first encounter, is a quirky, creative student who likes to make people laugh. During my fieldwork, she had a particular reputation for partying and dancing Shanghai's nights away together with Antonia. Andrea was born in Japan, but was too young to actively remember her first years there. She started school in Germany, but when she was twelve years old, her family left for Shanghai due to her father's career. In our conversations, she recalled that the move and the first few years at her new school were quite difficult. I interviewed Andrea individually three times: in June and September of 2011 and in June of 2012, at a café in Shanghai's former French Concession. I first met her on a Friday night out. Andrea, the only one of "the girls" who attended a different class, was one of the few students who lived downtown. While it took some time for us to get to know each other, we got along very well towards the end of my stay and kept in touch after she moved back to Germany to study communications. She is currently writing her Bachelor's thesis and is looking for opportunities to pursue a Master's degree.

Antonia was sixteen when I first met her at the German school. She was born in Germany, but grew up in Shanghai. She was one of the few expat students who had been at the same school since she began her studies. Her father is German, and her mother a successful Chinese businesswoman who studied in Germany. When we talked about her relationship with the city and her experiences in China, Antonia stressed how she differed from other expatriate children who only spend, on average, a few years in China. Antonia speaks both German and Chinese at home and likes to claim that she is "Shanghainese." She is a determined young woman, who has high expectations of herself, and highly values intelligence and analytical minds. Consequently, she can sometimes appear to be abrupt and direct in her judgment of others and herself. She is generous, independent, and does not shy away from arguments. During my fieldwork, the other students sometimes called her Antonio, because they considered some of her behavior to be masculine. Antonia was a key figure in my research, not only as an informant and friend, but also as a gatekeeper. It was her invitation to join nightlife activities that led to closer contacts with many others at the German school. Her way of including me and openly stating that "Marie ist eine von uns" (Marie is one of us) significantly impacted my acceptance as a researcher and friend into her peer group and class. I have visited Antonia several times since she moved to Germany and we are still in touch. She is now studying medicine.

Arnaud was sixteen years old and enrolled at a French school in Shanghai when I met him. He was born in Belgium, after his Chinese-born parents moved there for his father's studies and career. Arnaud is a Belgian national. When he was five years old, his family moved to the outskirts of Paris. When he was nine, his family decided to move to Shanghai because of a career opportunity for his father, as well as to be closer to his sick grandfather. I received Arnaud's phone number from Matthias. Arnaud and I agreed to meet at a Starbucks downtown, where he appeared with his long, black hair tied into a ponytail, wearing head phones. After carefully studying the interview questionnaire, he answered the questions in a circumspect way. I had short conversations with him after that, whenever I ran into him at the school, and we exchanged a few messages via Facebook. I particularly enjoyed the interview with Arnaud because he was very self-reflective and openly shared the difficulties of negotiating his position as an Asian-looking teenager who had been raised in Europe by Chinese parents. He often felt that it is impossible to succeed in either of the two worlds and feared alienation from his parents, particularly his mother. Arnaud was very driven creatively: he was involved in school plays and bands, and wrote short stories. This tireless engagement seemed to help him cope with the cultural entanglements of his world. After his graduation, Arnaud moved to Canada to study music recording. We are still in touch via the web.

Bjorn, a German student, was sixteen years old at the time of our first interview. I met Bjorn because he was in one of the classes at the German school that I was allowed to audit. At first, I noticed his Bavarian accent, which was rather uncommon among the other German students in Shanghai who spoke standard German. While our origins within Germany differed, we established a connection through our similar music taste, which allowed for easier and more detailed discussions on other issues. Bjorn had just arrived in Shanghai when I was conducting my fieldwork there in the summer of 2010. He had never lived outside the small Bavarian village that he grew up in and expressed that, initially, he was against moving to China. Nonetheless, Bjorn quickly established friendships with his classmates. He even functioned as the major link between "the girls" and "the boys" in the class. Perhaps not surprisingly, Bjorn was, for this reason, one of the students I felt most comfortable talking to and became, along with Matthias, one of my key male informants. After I left, Bjorn stayed in Shanghai for another year, before he moved back to Germany, to be trained as a teacher.

Britta, from Norway, was seventeen-year-old student at a British school when she took part in a group discussion with two of her fellow students. The discussion had been organized by the school principal's assistant. She, along with her parents and younger sister Freda, had only arrived in Shanghai a couple of months prior, due to her father's career. This was her

first stay abroad. Britta found the adjustment particularly challenging in terms of academics. She followed the IB (International Baccalaureate) curriculum at her school. Switching to English-medium education and a new school system had caused her grades to drop. This worried her particularly because two years before graduation her grades would determine which college she could enter. Consequently, she was considering returning to Norway after the first term to stay with relatives or her best friend's family, in order to obtain a high school diploma with a stronger academic record. Unfortunately, I was not able to stay in touch with Britta.

Charlie was sixteen years old when I first met her. Her parents were both born in China and met in Germany during their studies at university. They eventually became German nationals and Charlie was consequently born and raised in Germany. At the age of twelve, she and her family moved to Shanghai for her fathers' career. Charlie can be described as friendly, helpful, and having a sunny disposition, but she also has a keen sense of justice and can be easily angered over unfair actions, whether committed against herself or others. Charlie took part in a group discussion with Olivia and Andrea, but I also interviewed her twice individually in September 2011 and in June 2012. During my fieldwork, I felt that she often underestimated her abilities and often needlessly worried about her high school diploma (Abitur) and whether her grades would suffice to study medicine. Charlie and I got along very well and at times even met socially, for example for shopping sprees at Shanghai's eyeglasses market. After her graduation, Charlie moved to Germany while her parents and her younger sister stayed in Shanghai. She now studies medicine and we have met several times since her move.

Don was sixteen when I first met him during class at the German school in December 2010. A few weeks later, I interviewed him along with Bjorn and Alex. Don was born in Germany to Chinese-born parents and moved to Shanghai when he was twelve. Although I did not conduct any individual interviews with him, we often ran into each other at school and met during nights out. Don and Alex were close friends and often seemed inseparable. Don was particularly interested in electronic music and was an active member of the peer group that students mostly referred to as "the boys." After graduation, he moved to Germany and is currently studying to become an engineer.

Emily, age twelve when I met her, was born in Malaysia, but left when she was too young to retain any memories of living there. When we became acquainted, Emily had already lived in Malaysia, Beijing, and Thailand. She had arrived in Shanghai one and a half years prior to the interview and attended a British school. I interviewed her with fellow students Britta and Kazuo in a group discussion in November 2010.

Freda was fifteen years old when I interviewed her with Keith and Vijay. She was from Norway, where she had lived all her life until moving to Shanghai with her parents and sister in 2010, just a few months prior to the group discussion. She was enrolled at a British school and is Britta's younger sister.

Giovanni, who was seventeen years old when we met, was a rather quiet but cheerful student at the German school. At first, we hardly spoke and all I knew about him was that he was Swiss—seemingly his defining characteristic when other students at the German school referred to him. Although I had met him at school and during the peer group's nights out—he would regularly join Bjorn, Alex, Don, Peter, and Marco—it was only during my first follow-up stay in September 2011 that we conducted an interview and I had the chance to hear his own story. Giovanni was born in Switzerland and spent his elementary school years in Istanbul, where his father was on an assignment. After returning to Switzerland for a few years, his family moved to Shanghai, a decision his father had to make within a few days of being presented with the option. Giovanni was in ninth grade at the time. At the time of the interview, Giovanni and his family had been living in Shanghai for three years and he had started his penultimate year at school. We met for a follow-up interview just after his graduation in June 2012. Giovanni planned to study economics after completing his training in the Swiss army.

Jacob, who was nine years old when we met, was the youngest student I interviewed. He took part in a group discussion in November 2010 at an international British school, one and a half years after his family's move to Shanghai. Jacob had lived in Malaysia, Beijing, and Thailand. Jacob is Emily's younger brother.

Karina, who is half-Czech, half-German, was seventeen when we met. She had come to Shanghai six months before our first interview in early 2011. Karina was born in Prague, where she lived until her fifth birthday. Her family then moved to Germany for three years, followed by a three year stay in the north of China, then moved back to her home town of Prague. In 2010, her family moved to China again, this time to Shanghai. I became acquainted with Karina at the German school. Karina, a native speaker of German and Czech and who is fluent in English and French, enjoyed studying Chinese, which she had started upon her arrival in Shanghai. However, despite her bicultural family and her former experiences with moving, Karina found her family's relocation to Shanghai difficult, because she was so far away from her family and friends in Prague. When I first met Karina, her position in class was still that of a newcomer. Karina and her classmate Lara sat next to each other at that time. When I first interviewed them, they both stated that they felt alienated from the other girls in class, who had all been in Shanghai longer than they had. Karina sensed that the school environment was highly competitive and missed the level of group support she had experienced at

her former international school in Prague. I later conducted individual interviews with Karina followed and, over time, we developed a trusting relationship in which she would share the problems moving to Shanghai had caused, as well as her holiday adventures. I learned about the bullying she had to go through in class, in particular from a few boys, and how this had lead to an emotional outburst on her part, and the involvement of teachers at the school. Although the situation improved and she became friends with students from the other eleventh grade class, Karina never really became part of any of the peer groups in her own class. Whether as a cause or consequence, Karina disliked the nightlife activities that the other girls in her class would organize and, therefore, did not take part in any. During a follow-up interview a year after her arrival, in September 2011, Karina still felt homesick for her extended family and friends in Prague. We stayed in touch via email and Facebook throughout her last year in Shanghai, when I had already returned to Germany. When we met again in June 2012, she was excited to move on to Germany for her studies, hoping to rejoin old friends. She had very much withdrawn from school life, also due to health problems, and did not find the time for an interview. We are no longer in touch.

Kazuo, a sixteen-year-old Japanese boy, had moved to Shanghai one and a half years prior to the group interview with Emily and Britta, in November 2010. He had also lived in Japan and Thailand. It was the first time that he had been enrolled at an English-language school, which, at first, he considered a great challenge. He spoke English with a slight Japanese accent and answered interview questions in a very shy manner.

Keith was fourteen years old when he took part in a group discussion with Freda and Vijay in November 2010, at a British school. Keith came from Singapore and had moved to Shanghai at the age of three, due to his parents' work. He speaks Chinese fluently.

Kressi was fifteen when we first met at the German school where I was allowed to work. She was born in Germany, to Vietnamese parents with Cantonese roots, but had moved to Shanghai at an early age and seemed to have family all over the world. Like Mia, she had skipped a grade and was one of the youngest in her class. I regularly spent time with Kressi, as she gradually became part of "the girls" over the school year. I also interviewed her twice with Mia, in February and September 2011, and once individually, in June 2012. Due to her interest in fashion and arts, it was Kressi and her friend who put together the film for the awards ceremony in Berlin, where the German school received a prize for its outstanding art department. After graduation, Kressi decided to stay in Shanghai with Bjorn, whom she started dating a year prior to graduation, to take one semester of Chinese at Jiaotong University. While she originally had thought about studying event management, PR, or something related to the arts and fashion, she eventually moved to Germany to study economics.

Lara is half Dutch, half German, and was sixteen years old when we met. She had grown up in Germany until her parents announced that they would move to Shanghai in the summer of 2010. I met Lara at the German school and conducted one group interview with her and Karina, the two new girls in the class. A strong soccer player, Lara became captain of the girl's team at her school, an activity which she enjoyed. However, Lara had difficulty getting along with the girls in her grade. I quite often accompanied her during nightlife activities, where she mainly joined "the boys" peer group that her then-boyfriend Peter belonged to. On several occasions, Lara and I were the only females in the group exploring Shanghai's clubs, which was the foundation of a friendly connection. Although she was comfortable talking to me at clubs or during school breaks, Lara never conducted a second interview. Lara was very active on Facebook and managed to stay in touch with her old friends that way. When difficulties adjusting to the academic environment led to her voluntarily repeat the eleventh grade, Lara found new friends in Shanghai. By June 2012, she seemed to have finally settled into life in Shanghai. We are no longer in touch.

Marco is half-Brazilian, half-German, and was seventeen years old when we met. He grew up in Germany and spent his summers in Brazil until he moved to Shanghai one and a half years prior to the interview. Marco was enrolled at the German school and I was introduced to him during a Friday night out, by the students I usually spent time with during class. I conducted one long interview with him and his classmate and friend Peter. After that, we occasionally chatted during school outings or at nightlife venues. Marco and his family were one of the few families living in downtown Shanghai, in the former French concession. Although this made his commute to school quite long, he enjoyed his home's proximity to bars and cafés. Due to his physical distance from school, he joined an international capoeira group rather than participating in extracurricular activities at his school.

Matthias and I met at the German School in spring 2011. With his long hair and clothes related to heavy-metal culture, he looked quite different from most of the other students, which led to his nickname Metalmatze. With his in-ear headphones always dangling from the collar of his black T-shirt, he was one of the more quiet characters in school. He only began to open up when we started talking about the bands he was part of, the jam sessions he enjoyed with some of the French students, and how he was making a small income as a drum teacher. After discussing these other topics, he seemed less shy and was more willing to tell me about his Shanghai experience. Matthias turned out to be a crucial link to my meeting students from other international schools and introduced me to several of his friends. He had moved to Shanghai at the age of twelve and was—by the time I met him when he was eighteen—about to return to Germany. We frequently talked about his immediate plans: after his ini-

tial plans, which included the hope of traveling to Australia, had to be put aside and he was forced to look for a career path, he decided to join the German army for one year. His parents and sister stayed on in Shanghai and he moved to his grandparents' house in Germany. Once in the German army, however, he stayed primarily at the barracks. We stayed in touch via Facebook and I eventually visited his new home in Germany. He proudly showed me around his flat, which was located close to his grandparents' house. For a follow-up interview, Matthias also visited me for an afternoon in Heidelberg, where we discussed how he felt about moving back to Germany. At the time, he was particularly grateful for his army experience, which made his return easier by providing him with a new routine. Matthias also reconnected with old elementary schools friends in his former hometown. We both returned to Shanghai for the graduation ceremony of his former classmates. After his time in the army, Matthias completed an apprenticeship and is currently making plans to study business and information technology.

Mia was fifteen when I met her and was one of the youngest students in the eleventh grade of the German school. Born in Germany, she grew up in Singapore, and then moved to Berlin before her first stay in Shanghai. After a few years there, her family relocated to Hong Kong for one year, and then returned to Shanghai. Mia remembered this return as being particularly difficult because everyone expected her to be familiar with Shanghai. However, her social environment had changed significantly during her year of absence: some friends had moved on while others had forged new friendships of which she was not part. Additionally, when she returned to Shanghai from Hong Kong, Mia skipped one grade along with her close friend Kressi. This was when I met Mia, who was friendly and open, but always seemed weighed down by the pressure of her high expectations for herself. Diligent, ambitious, and well-organized, she was always the right person to ask about class schedules or dates for school events. Mia only occasionally joined nightlife activities because, at the age of fifteen, her parents would not allow her to go out very often. With her best friend Kressi, she shared interests in fashion, arts, and design. Mia was active in the school theater group and was widely admired for her way with words—I found out why when we stayed in touch via email upon my return to Germany. Her emails were always a pleasure to read. Apart from our frequent interaction at school, dinners with "the girls," or occasional nightlife activities, I talked to Mia about her Shanghai experience in two group interviews with Kressi in February and September 2011, as well as in an individual interview, in June 2012. She and her family returned to Germany after her graduation and Mia then began college, where she lived on her own. In 2013, feeling dissatisfied with her choice of studies, she moved back in with her family and began an internship. During an online chat, she emphasized how much she missed Shanghai and her community there. Mia thought about alternative study programs and eventually chose

to pursue architecture. When I conducted an interview with her in the summer of 2014, nine months after she had begun her course and moved to a new town, she was very happy with her decision.

Olivia was sixteen when I met her. She is from Belgium and had lived in Germany for several years before her family moved to Shanghai, in 2007. Due to her upbringing in Germany and her German education, she is fully bilingual. In Shanghai, she also attended a German-medium school. Additionally, she had Flemish class once a week after school, to be trained to write in her mother tongue. Olivia was part of "the girls" and I spent many days and nights out with her and her friends. I interviewed her once in a group setting, with Antonia and Charlie in early 2011, and conducted a further follow-up interview with her individually, in June 2012. Olivia was always friendly and supportive of my project. She knew many students from other schools and tried to help me arrange more interviews. At school, everyone admired Olivia for her beauty. She was very active on Facebook and we often exchanged messages during my time away from Shanghai. We are still in touch today. After graduation, she started studying in her parents' hometown in Belgium.

Paul was seventeen years old when we first met. He was born in Brazil and has a Brazilian mother and a German father. He is fluent in English and Portuguese; his German, however, is only basic. Paul grew up in Brazil and the United States and moved to Shanghai six years prior to our interview in May 2011. At that time, he was just about to graduate from a private, American Christian school and was making plans to move to Germany for college. His father had already moved on to Thailand and his mother planned to follow him after Paul's graduate ceremony. Paul was introduced to me by Matthias from the German school. The two had met through a common friend, whom Paul happened to bump into on a regular basis in different bars or nightclubs. They became friends and founded a band. Paul was interested in my research and agreed to meet for an interview at a coffee shop downtown. In August 2011, Paul moved to a German university town and enrolled at a private, English-language university. His grandparents and half-sister also live in Germany, though not in the same area. After the interview in Shanghai, I met Paul once more in person, just after Christmas 2011. We had stayed in touch via Facebook and exchanged phone numbers, planning to meet up in Germany. During our meeting, we discussed his arrival and emplacement in Germany, as well as his future plans. He completed his Bachelor's degree in 2015.

Peter was already eighteen years old when we met. A tall boy with hair that always seemed to cover half his face, he was a student at the German school, in the same grade, but in a different class than the one I was allowed to accompany. However, he and his friend Marco spent a lot of time with the students from "my" class. As part of "the boys," Peter went out fre-

quently and it was therefore not surprising that we got to know each other during nightlife activities. I first interviewed him with Marco, in May 2011, in a downtown café. For Peter, who was born in northern Germany, the move to Shanghai was his first and only move abroad. When the interview took place, he had lived in the city for almost four years. I met Peter again for an individual interview in June 2012, just a few days before he left for Germany right after his graduation. Peter, who always wore headphones and a beanie, was interested in young German street-wear labels and we sometimes talked about new styles we had discovered. He was also always interested in my research and student life in Germany and liked to discuss German politics. Peter became an important gatekeeper in my research during my last follow-up stay in June 2012, when he invited me to several activities. At that time, he seemed to have a particularly strong position among "the boys." After graduation, Peter returned to the city he considers his hometown in Germany and shared a flat with Alex. He obtained a part-time student job, hoping to enroll at the city's university. We met several times over the first few years after his move back. He finally moved to the same town Bjorn and Charlie live in, and is currently studying to become a teacher.

Tamara was twelve years old when I hosted a group discussion with her and two other students (Jacob and Allen) at an international British school. After her first move to China at the age of two, she moved back and forth between China and Singapore—her country that had issued her passport. Tamara was very talkative during the group interview. Unfortunately, I was not able to keep in touch with her.

Vijay was fourteen when he, along with Freda and Keith, took part in a group discussion I conducted at a British school. He is from India and had moved to Shanghai six months prior to the interview.

Xia is a Chinese national and was seventeen when we first met. Xia had been granted special permission by the Shanghai municipal government to attend the German school. Born in China, Xia moved to Germany with his parents when he was six years old, so his father could begin his doctoral studies. Xia therefore started his school career in Germany. After four years and one move within Germany, his parents decided to return to Shanghai. Although he had studied Chinese writing after school and on the weekends, Xia had difficulties with the local Chinese schools' entrance tests, because the education system and its ways of testing were unfamiliar to him. His parents therefore applied for a special permit and Xia was allowed to attend the German school. Here, Xia was an academically strong student. However, his fellow students always regarded Xia as different. I conducted an individual interview with him in spring 2011 and, after that, met him on a regular basis at school, where we would occasionally chat. When I asked all under-age students to provide me with their parents' per-

mission for interviews, I was surprised that Xia thought he could not participate; his parents were of the opinion that he did not fit the definition of students that my research targeted. The main issue was my use of the term "Third Culture Kids." I had chosen the expression because I knew that the expatriate community was familiar with it and it seemed a shortcut to explain my research agenda on expatriate youth. Xia's parents, however, did not see their son as such a hybrid "TCK," but as Chinese. I was glad when my explanation to Xia that the term can be debated and that anyone who was interested could join led his parents to consent. I discussed the politics of cultural identity and intergenerational conflicts around this issue with Xia, who was very self-reflective upon the matter, in our first interview. This conversation showed me the difficulties that can arise for students who have to negotiate between the world at home and the world at school. I conducted a second interview with Xia in June 2012. After graduation, Xia moved to Germany to study engineering.

Bibliography

Ackers, Louise, and Helen Stalford. 2004. *A Community for Children? Children, Citizenship and Internal Migration in the EU*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Ahmed, Sara, Claudia Castañeda, Anne-Marie Fortier, and Mimi Sheller. 2003. "Introduction." In *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, edited by Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castañeda, Anne-Marie Fortier, and Mimi Sheller, 1–19. Oxford: Berg.

Amit, Vered, ed. 2007. *Going First Class? New Approaches to Privileged Travel and Movement*. New York: Berghaan Books.

Anderson, Michael. 1999. "Children In-Between: Constructing Identities in the Bicultural Family." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5 (1): 13–26. doi:10.2307/2660960.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Theory, Culture & Society* 7 (2): 295–310. doi:10.1177/026327690007002017.

———. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Barth, Fredrik, ed. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Basu, Paul, and Simon Coleman. 2008. "Introduction: Migrant Worlds, Material Cultures." *Mobilities* 3 (3): 313–30. doi:10.1080/17450100802376753.

Baudler, Bernhard A. 1996. "'Nobody will ever know what takes place in initiation ceremonies.' Das Schweigen der Jüngeren und die Macht der Älteren: Beispiele zur Erwachsenenzentriertheit in der Ethnologie." In *Jung und wild: Zur kulturellen Konstruktion von Kindheit und Jugend*, edited by Dorle Dracklé, 118–51. Berlin: Reimer.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1983. *Simulations*. New York: Semiotexte.

Baumann, Gerd, and Thijl Sunier. 2002. "Die Schule im gesellschaftlichen Raum." In *Staat—Schule—Ethnizität: Politische Sozialisation von Immigrantenkindern in vier europäischen Ländern*, edited by Werner Schiffauer, Gerd Baumann, Riva Kastoryano, and Steven Vertovec, 23–36. Münster: Waxmann.

Beaverstock, Jonathan V. 2002. "Transnational Elites in Global Cities: British Expatriates in Singapore's Financial District." *Geoforum* 33 (4): 525–38.

———. 2011. "Servicing British Expatriate 'Talent' in Singapore: Exploring Ordinary Transnationalism and the Role of the 'Expatriate' Club." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (5): 709–28. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2011.559714.

Bennett, Andy. 2000. *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

———. 2007. "As Young as you Feel: Youth as a Discursive Construct." In *Youth Cultures Scenes, Subcultures and Tribes,* edited by Paul Hodkinson, 26:23–36. New York: Routledge.

Berg, Wolfgang, and Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh. 2010a. "Editors' Introduction." In *Exploring Transculturalism*, edited by Wolfgang Berg and Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh, 7–17. Wiesbaden: VS Research.

———, eds. 2010b. *Exploring Transculturalism*. Wiesbaden: VS Research.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1990. "Interview with Homi Bhabha: The Third Space." In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, 207–21. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

———. [1994]2009. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

———. 1997. "Verortungen der Kultur." In *Hybride Kulturen: Beiträge zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte*, edited by Elisabeth Bronfen, Benjamin Marius, and Therese Steffen, 123–48. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.
———. [1996]2012. "Culture's In-Between." In *Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, 53–60. London: SAGE.
Binder, Jana. 2005. *Globality: Eine Ethnographie über Backpacker*. Forum europäische Ethnologie 7. Münster: Lit.
Blos, Peter. [1962]1966. *On Adolescence: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation*. New York: Free Press.
———. 1970. *The Young Adolescent: Clinical Studies*. New York: Free Press.
Blunt, Alison, and Robyn M Dowling. 2006. *Home*. London: Routledge.
Bönisch-Brednich, Brigitte. 2002. *Auswandern: Destination Neuseeland. Eine ethnographische Migrationsstudie*. Berlin: Mana-Verlag.
Bonnett, Alastair. 2004. *The Idea of the West: Culture, Politics, and History*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
———. 1986. "The Forms Of Capital." In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by John G. Richardson, 241–58. New York: Greenwood Press.
Brah, Avtar. 1996. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge.
Breitung, Werner. 2012. "Enclave Urbanism in China: Attitudes Towards Gated Communities in Guangzhou." *Urban Geography* 33 (2): 278–94. doi:10.2747/0272-3638.33.2.278.
Brettell, Caroline, ed. 1993. *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography.* Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.
Brosius, Christiane. 2010. *India's Middle Class: New Forms of Urban Leisure, Consumption, and Prosperity*. London: Routledge.
———. 2011. "Love in the Age of Valentine and Pink Underwear: Media and Politics of Intimacy in South Asia." In *Transcultural Turbulences: Towards a Multi-Sited Reading of Image Flows*, 27–66. Heidelberg: Springer.
Brosius, Christiane, and Roland Wenzlhuemer, eds. 2011. *Transcultural Turbulences: Towards a Multi-Sited Reading of Image Flows*. Transcultural Research: Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context. Heidelberg: Springer.
Bucholtz, Mary. 2002. "Youth and Cultural Practice." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 525–52.
Burns, Maureen A. 2011. "Documenting Mobility." In *Writing Out of Limbo: International Childhoods, Global Nomads, and Third Culture Kids*, edited by Gene H. Bell-Villada, Nina Sichel, Faith Eidse, and Elaine Neill Orr, 356–70. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
Butcher, Melissa. 2009. "Ties That Bind: The Strategic Use of Transnational Relationships in Demarcating Identity and Managing Difference." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (8): 1353–71. doi:10.1080/13691830903123153.
Butcher, Melissa. 2012. "Distinctly Delhi: Affect and Exclusion in a Crowded City." In Urban Theory beyond the West: A World of Cities, edited by Tim Edensor and Mark Jayne, 175–94. London: Routledge.
Butler, Tim. 2003. "Living in the Bubble: Gentrification and Its 'Others' in North London." *Urban Studies* 40 (12): 2469–86. doi:10.1080/0042098032000136165.

Carmel, Simon. 2011. "Social Access in the Workplace: Are Ethnographers Gossips?" *Work, Employment & Society* 25 (3): 551–60.
Castells, Manuel. 1996. *The Rise of the Network Society*. The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture. Oxford: Blackwell.
Chambers, Iain. 1994. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. London: Routledge.

Chatterton, Paul, and Robert Hollands. 2003. *Urban Nightscapes: Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces, and Corporate Power*. London: Routledge.
Cheng, Stephanie. 2007. "Teenage Drinking." *Cityweekend: Parents & Kids*.
China Daily. 2006. "China Bans Underage Drinking," January 6. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-01/06/content_510002.htm.
Chua, Amy. 2011. *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. New York: Penguin.
Cohen, Erik. 1977. "Expatriate Communities." *Current Sociology* 24 (3): 5–90.
Coleman, Simon, and Peter Collins, eds. 2006. *Locating the Field: Space, Place and Context in Anthropology.* Oxford; New York: Berg.
Coles, Anne. 2008. "Making Multiple Migrations: The Life of British Diplomatic Families Overseas." In *Gender and Family Among Transnational Professionals*, edited by Anne Coles and Anne-Meike Fechter, 125–48. New York: Routledge.
Coles, Anne, and Anne-Meike Fechter, eds. 2008. *Gender and Family Among Transnational Professionals*. New York: Routledge.
Community Center Shanghai Guide: Welcome (Back) to Shanghai. 2010. "Interkom."
Conradson, David, and Alan Latham. 2005. "Transnational Urbanism: Attending to Everyday Practices and Mobilities." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (2): 227–33. doi:10.1080/1369183042000339891.
Conradson, David, and Deirdre Mckay. 2007. "Translocal Subjectivities: Mobility, Connection, Emotion." *Mobilities* 2 (2): 167–74.
Crouch, David. 2005. "Flirting with Space: Tourism Geographies as Sensuous/Expressive Practice." In *Seductions of Place: Geographical Perspectives on Globalization and Touristed Landscapes*, edited by Carolyn Cartier and Alan A. Lew, 23–35. London: Routledge.

De Boeck, Filip, and Marie-Françoise Plissart, eds. 2006. *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City*. Antwerp: Ludion.
Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Demant, Jakob, and Jeanette Østergaard. 2007. "Partying as Everyday Life: Investigations of Teenagers' Leisure Life." *Journal of Youth Studies* 10 (5): 517–37. doi:10.1080/13676260701594828.
Desforges, Luke. 1998. "'Checking Out the Planet:' Global Representations/Local Identities and Youth Travel." In *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*, edited by Tracey Skelton and Gill Valentine, 175–92. London: Routledge.
Dikötter, Frank. 1992. *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Dobeneck, Florian. 2010. *Mobile Eliten. Deutsche Entsandte und ihre Familien in São Paulo*. Marburg: Tectum-Verl.
Dobson, Madeleine E. 2009. "Unpacking Children in Migration Research." *Children's Geographies* 7 (3): 355–60.
Donald, Stephanie Hemelryk. 2000. "Seeing White: Female Whiteness and the Purity of Children in Australian, Chinese, and British Visual Culture." *Social Semiotics* 10 (2): 157–71.
Donald, Stephanie Hemelryk, and John G. Gammack. 2007. *Tourism and the Branded City: Film and Identity on the Pacific Rim*. Farnham: Ashgate.
Dyer, Richard. 1997. *White*. London: Routledge.

Englund, Harri. 2002. "Ethnography After Globalism: Migration and Emplacement in Malawi." *American Ethnologist* 29 (2): 261–86.
Erikson, Erik H. 1968. *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*. New York: Norton.

Falzon, Mark-Anthony. 2009. "Introduction." In *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research*, edited by Mark-Anthony Falzon. Farnham: Ashgate.

Farrer, James. 2002. *Opening Up: Youth Sex Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2008. "From 'Passports' to 'Joint Ventures:' Intermarriage between Chinese Nationals and Western Expatriates Residing in Shanghai." *Asian Studies Review* 32 (1): 7–29.

———. 2010. "'New Shanghailanders' or 'New Shanghainese:' Western Expatriates' Narratives of Emplacement in Shanghai." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (8): 1211–28. doi:10.1080/13691831003687675.

———. 2011. "Global Nightscapes in Shanghai as Ethnosexual Contact Zones." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (5): 747–64.

Farrer, James, and Andrew David Field. 2012. "From Interzone to Transzone: Race and Sex in the Contact Zones of Shanghai's Global Nightlife." *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, no. 31. http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue31/farrer-field.htm.

Fechter, Anne-Meike. 2007a. "Living in a Bubble: Expatriates' Transnational Spaces." In *Going First Class? New Approaches to Privileged Travel and Movement*, edited by Vered Amit, 33–52. New York: Berghahn Books.

———. 2007b. *Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Fechter, Anne-Meike, and Katie Walsh. 2010. "Examining 'Expatriate' Continuities: Postcolonial Approaches to Mobile Professionals." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (8): 1197–1210. doi:10.1080/13691831003687667.

Field, Andrew. 2008. "From D.D's to Y.Y. to Park 97 to Muse: Dance Club Spaces and the Construction of Class in Shanghai, 1997-2007." *China: An International Journal* 6 (1): 18–43.

Fong, Vanessa L. 2007. "Morality, Cosmopolitanism, or Academic Attainment? Discourses on 'Quality' and Urban Chinese-Only-Children's Claims to Ideal Personhood." *City and Society* 19 (1): 86–113.

Franke, Amelie. 2008. "A Transcultural Home? An Investigation into Notions of Home and Belonging Among Third Culture Kids." In *Transkulturelle Praktiken: Empirische Studien zu Innovationsprozessen*. St. Ingbert: Röhrig.

Frantz, Klaus. 2006. "Private Gated Neighbourhoods: A Progressive Trend in US Urban Development." In Private Cities: Global and Local Perspectives, edited by Georg Glasze, Chris Webster, and Klaus Frantz, 64–75. London: Routledge.

Giddens, Anthony. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gille, Zsuzsa, and Séan Ó Riain. 2002. "Global Ethnography." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (1): 271–95. doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.140945.

Gillespie, Marie. 1999. "Fernsehen im multiethnischen Kontext." In *Widerspenstige Kulturen*, edited by Karl Hörning and Rainer Winter. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Giroir, Guillaume. 2006. "The Purple Jade Villas (Beijing): A Golden Ghetto in Red China." In *Private Cities: Global and Local Perspectives*, edited by Georg Glasze, Chris Webster, and Klaus Frantz, 142–52. London: Routledge.

Glasze, Georg. 2006. "Segregation and Seclusion: The Case of Compounds for Western Expatriates in Saudi Arabia." *GeoJournal* 66 (1): 63–88. doi:10.1007/s10708-006-9018-z.

Glasze, Georg, Chris Webster, and Klaus Frantz, eds. 2006. *Private Cities: Global and Local Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York: Free Press.

Goldstein, Daniel M. 2002. "Desconfianza and Problems of Representation in Urban Ethnography." *Anthropological Quarterly* 75 (3): 485–517.

Greenholtz, Joe, and Jean Kim. 2009. “The Cultural Hybridity of Lena: A Multi-Method Case Study of a Third Culture Kid.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 33 (5): 391–98. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.05.004.

Greenspan, Anna. 2008a. “China Vs. America? Learning Strategies in the 21st Century.” *The Globalist*. August 25. http://www.theglobalist.com/storyid.aspx?storyid=5264.

———. 2008b. “China Vs. America? Learning Strategies in the 21st Century (Part 2).” *The Globalist*. August 26. http://www.theglobalist.com/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=5265.

———. 2011a. “Tiger Moms: The Benefits of Eating Bitterness.” *Pacific Standard*, February 5. http://www.miller-mccune.com/culture/tiger-moms-the-benefits-of-eating-bitterness-28029/.

———. 2011b. “Local Experiences: Anna Greenspan Interviews Emily Meyer on Her Experiences with the Local Education System.” *That's Shanghai*, April 21. http://www.thatsmags.com/shanghai/article/368/local-experiences.

Griese, Hartmut M. 2004. “‘Ich bin ein Wirrwarr von Kulturen—“Zwiebel” und “Chamäleon”?’ Review of: David E. Pollock, Ruth van Reken und Georg Pflüger: Third Culture Kids. Aufwachsen in mehreren Kulturen.” *socialnet*. http://socialnet.de/rezensionen/1446.php.

Grimshaw, Trevor, and Coreen Sears. 2008. “‘Where Am I From?’ ‘Where Do I Belong?’ The Negotiation and Maintenance of Identity by International School Students.” *Journal of Research in International Education* 7 (3): 259–78.

Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson. 1992. “Beyond ‘Culture:’ Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference.” *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1): 6–23.

———. 1997. “‘The Field’ as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology.” In *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*, 1–46. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gusfield, Joseph R. 1987. “Passage to Play: Rituals of Drinking Time in American Society.” In *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology*, edited by Mary Douglas, 73–90. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hage, Ghassan. 2005. “A Not So Multi-Sited Ethnography of a Not So Imagined Community.” *Anthropological Theory* 5 (4): 463–75. doi:10.1177/1463499605059232.

Hall, Stuart. 1990. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, 222–37. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

———. 1994. *Rassismus und kulturelle Identität*. Hamburg: Argument-Verlag.

———. 1996. “Introduction: Who Needs ‘Identity?’” In *Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, 1–17. London: SAGE.

———, ed. 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE.

———. [1996] 2012. “New Ethnicities.” In *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, 441–49. London: Routledge.

Hannerz, Ulf. 1980. *Exploring the City*. New York: Columbia University Press.

———. 1996. *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. London: Routledge.

———. 2006. “Studying Down, Up, Sideways, Through, Backwards, Forwards, Away and at Home: Reflections on the Field Worries of an Expansive Discipline.” In *Locating the Field: Space, Place and Context in Anthropology*, edited by Simon Coleman and Peter Collins, 23–41. Oxford: Berg.

Hartmann, Michael. 2000. “Class-Specific Habitus and the Social Reproduction of the Business Elite in Germany and France.” *The Sociological Review* 48 (2): 241–61.

Hassenpflug, Dieter. 2009. *Der urbane Code Chinas*. Bauwelt-Fundamente 142. Basel: Birkhäuser.

Hastrup, Kirsten. 1990. "The Ethnographic Present: A Reinvention." *Cultural Anthropology* 5 (1): 45–61.

Hatfield, M. E. 2010. "Children Moving 'Home?' Everyday Experiences of Return Migration in Highly Skilled Households." *Childhood* 17 (2): 243–57. doi:10.1177/0907568210365747.

Hebdige, Dick. 1979. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. New Accents. London: Methuen.

Hill, Mike. 1997. *Whiteness: A Critical Reader*. New York: New York University Press.

Hindman, Heather. 2009a. "Cosmopolitan Codifications: Elites, Expatriates, and Difference in Kathmandu, Nepal." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 16 (3): 249–70. doi:10.1080/10702890902861255.

———. 2009b. "Shopping in the Bazaar/Bizarre Shopping: Culture and the Accidental Elitism of Expatriates in Kathmandu, Nepal." *Journal of Popular Culture* 42 (4): 663–79.

Hirschfeld, Lawrence A. 2002. "Why Don't Anthropologists Like Children?" *American Anthropologist* 104 (2): 611–27.

Hodkinson, Paul. 2007. "Youth Cultures: A Critical Outline of Key Debates." In *Youth Cultures: Scenes, Subcultures, and Tribes*, edited by Paul Hodkinson and Wolfgang Deicke, 1–21. London: Routledge.

Hoerder, Dirk, Yvonne Hébert, and Irina Schmitt, eds. 2005. *Negotiating Transcultural Lives: Belongings and Social Capital Among Youth in Comparative Perspective*. Göttingen: V & R Unipress.

Hollands, R. 2002. "Divisions in the Dark: Youth Cultures, Transitions and Segmented Consumption Spaces in the Night-Time Economy." *Journal of Youth Studies* 5 (2): 153–71.

Howes, David. 2005. "Introduction." In *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, edited by David Howes, 1–17. Oxford: Berg.

———. 2007. *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Hutchins, Teresa. 2011. "'They Told Us in a Curry Shop': Child–Adult Relations in the Context of Family Migration Decision-Making." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (8): 1219–35. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2011.590926.

International Center for Alcohol Policies. 2010. "Minimum Age Limits Worldwide." *Website of the International Center for Alcohol Policies*. http://www.icap.org/Table/MinimumAgeLimitsWorldwide.

Jackson, Peter, Philip Crang, and Claire Dwyer. 2004. "Introduction: The Spaces of Transnationality." In *Transnational Spaces*, edited by Peter Jackson, Philip Crang, and Claire Dwyer, 1–23. London: Routledge.

James, Allison, and Adrian James. 2008. *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies*. London: SAGE.

Jeffries, Elena D. 2004. "Experiences of Trust with Parents. A Qualitative Investigation of African American, Latino, and Asian American Boys from Low-Income Families." In *Adolescent Boys: Exploring Diverse Cultures in Boyhood*, edited by Niobe Way and Judy Y. Chu, 107–28. New York: New York University Press.

Johnson, M. Dujon. 2011. *Race & Racism in the Chinas: Chinese Racial Attitudes Toward Africans and African-Americans*. Bloomington: AuthorHouse.

Kato, Yuki. 2009. "Doing Consumption and Sitting Cars: Adolescent Bodies in Suburban Commercial Spaces." *Children's Geographies* 7 (1): 51–66. doi:10.1080/14733280802630908.

Knörr, Jacqueline. 2005. "When German Children Come 'Home:' Experiences of (Re)-Migration to Germany and Some Remarks About the 'TCK' Issue." In

Childhood and Migration: From Experience to Agency, edited by Jacqueline Knörr, 51–76. Bielefeld: transcript.

Knörr, Jacqueline, and Angela Nunes. 2005. “Introduction.” In *Childhood and Migration: From Experience to Agency*, edited by Jacqueline Knörr, 9–21. Bielefeld: transcript.

Koch, Gertraud. 2008. *Transkulturelle Praktiken: Empirische Studien zu Innovationsprozessen*. St. Ingbert: Röhrig.

Lagerkvist, Amanda. 2007. “Gazing at Pudong ‘With a Drink in Your Hand:’ Time Travel, Mediation, and Multisensuous Immersion in the Future City of Shanghai.” *The Senses & Society* 2 (2): 155–72.

Lahelma, Elina, and Tuula Gordon. 2003. “Home as a Physical, Social, and Mental Space: Young People’s Reflections on Leaving Home.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 6 (4): 377–90. doi:10.1080/1367626032000162104.

Lamb, Sarah. 2002. “Intimacy in a Transnational Era: The Remaking of Aging Among Indian Americans.” *Diaspora* 11 (3): 299–330.

Leavitt, John. 1996. “Meaning and Feeling in the Anthropology of Emotions.” *American Ethnologist* 23 (3): 514–39.

Ley, David. 2004. “Transnational Spaces and Everyday Lives.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29 (2): 151–64.

Liechty, Mark. 2003. *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-Class Culture in a New Consumer Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Low, Setha M. 2003. “The Edge and the Center: Gated Communities and the Discourse of Urban Fear.” In The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture, edited by Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, 387–407. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Lu, Hanchao. 1999. *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

MacDougall, David. 2006. *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Magolda, Peter Mark. 2003. “Saying Good-Bye: An Anthropological Examination of a Commencement Ritual.” *Journal of College Student Development* 44 (6): 779–96. doi:10.1353/csd.2003.0073.

Malaquais, Dominique. 2007. “Douala/Johannesburg/New York: Cityscapes Imagined.” In *Cities in Contemporary Africa*, edited by Martin J. Murray, 31–52. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.

Malbon, Ben. 1998. “The Club: Clubbing, Consumption, Identity and the Spatial Practices of Every-Night Life.” In *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*, edited by Tracey Skelton and Gill Valentine, 266–86. London: Routledge.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. [1929]1968. *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia*. London: Routledge.

———. 1970. “Introduction.” In *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, edited by Fernando Ortiz, vii–xiv. New York: Vintage Books.

Marcus, George E. 1983a. “‘Elite’ as a Concept, Theory, and Research Tradition.” In *Elites: Ethnographic Issues*, edited by George E Marcus, 7–27. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

———, ed. 1983b. *Elites: Ethnographic Issues*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

———. 1995. “Ethnography In/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1): 95–117.

Massey, Doreen. 1995. “Making Spaces Or, Geography Is Political Too.” *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture* 1 (Autumn): 193–208.

———. 1998. "The Spatial Construction of Youth Cultures." In *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*, edited by Tracey Skelton and Gill Valentine, 121–29. London: Routledge.

———. 2005. For Space. London: SAGE.

Matthews, Hugh. 2003. "The Street as a Liminal Space. The Barbed Spaces of Childhood." In Children in the City: Home, Neighbourhood and Community, edited by Pia Monrad Christensen and Margaret O'Brien, 101–17. London: Routledge Falmer.

Mattley, Christine. 2002. "The Temporality of Emotion: Constructing Past Emotions." *Symbolic Interaction* 25 (3): 363–78. doi:10.1525/si.2002.25.3.363.

McDermott, Josephine. 2010. "Another Round: Shanghai Reopens 110ft Bar Fabled for Colonial Decadence." *The Telegraph*, October. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8036306/Another-round-Shanghai-reopens-110ft-bar-fabled-for-colonial-decadence.html.

McRobbie, Angela, and Jenny Garber. [1975]1997. "Girls and Subcultures." In *The Subcultures Reader*, edited by Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton, 112–20. London: Routledge.

Mead, Margaret. [1928]1929. *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilisation*. 4th printing. New York: Morrow.

———. [1930]1963. *Growing up in New Guinea: A Comparative Study of Primitive Education*. 5th ed. New York: New American Library.

———. [1939]1948. *From the South Seas: Studies of Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Societies*. New York: Morrow.

Miller, Daniel, ed. 2001. *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*. Oxford: Berg.

Miller, Daniel, Peter Jackson, Michael Rowlands, Nigel Thrift, and Beverly Holbrook. 1998. Shopping, Place, and Identity. London: Routledge.

Milner, Murray. 2004. *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: American Teenagers, Schools, and the Culture of Consumption*. New York: Routledge.

Möckel-Rieke, Hannah. 1998. "Introduction: Media and Cultural Memory." *Amerikastudien* 43 (1): 5–17.

Molgat, Marc. 2002. "Leaving Home in Quebec: Theoretical and Social Implications of (Im)mobility Among Youth." *Journal of Youth Studies* 5 (2): 135–52.

Moore, Fiona. 2008. "The German School in London, UK: Fostering the Next Generation of National Cosmopolitans?" In *Gender and Family Among Transnational Professionals*, edited by Anne Coles and Anne-Meike Fechter, 85–101. New York: Routledge.

Moser, Johannes. 2000. "Kulturanthropologische Jugendforschung." In *Jugendkulturen: Recherchen in Frankfurt am Main und London*, edited by Johannes Moser, 66:11–57. Frankfurt: Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie.

"Mural Bar and Restaurant | Shanghai." 2013. March 18. http://www.muralbar.com/mural_site.html.

Nadig, Maya. 2004. "Transculturality in Progress: Theoretical and Methodological Aspects Drawn from Cultural Studies and Psychoanalysis." In *Transculturality: Epistemology, Ethics, and Politics*, edited by Jörg Sandkühler and Hong-Bin Lim, 9–21. Frankfurt: Lang.

Nagel, Joan. 2003. Race, Ethnicity and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Fruits. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nash, Dennison. 1970. *A Community in Limbo: An Anthropological Study of an American Community Abroad*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Nava, Mica. 2002. "Cosmopolitan Modernity: Everyday Imaginaries and the Register of Difference." *Theory, Culture & Society* 19 (1-2): 81–99. doi:10.1177/026327640201900104.

Northcote, Jeremy. 2006. “Nightclubbing and the Search for Identity: Making the Transition from Childhood to Adulthood in an Urban Milieu.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 9 (1): 1–16. doi:10.1080/13676260500523580.

Orellana, Marjorie Faulstich, Barrie Thorne, Anna Chee, and Wan Shun Eva Lam. 2001. “Transnational Childhoods: The Participation of Children in Processes of Family Migration.” *Social Problems* 48 (4): 572–91. doi:10.1525/sp.2001.48.4.572.

Ortiz, Fernando. 1970. *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. New York: Vintage Books.

Pascoe, Robin. 2006. *Raising Global Nomads: Parenting Abroad in an On-Demand World*. Vancouver: Expatriate Press.

Peterson, Bill E., and Laila T. Plamondon. 2009. “Third Culture Kids and the Consequences of International Sojourns on Authoritarianism, Acculturative Balance, and Positive Affect.” *Journal of Research in Personality* 43 (5): 755–63. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2009.04.014.

Peterson, Erick. 2011. “Shanghai’s Tormented Teens.” *Global Times*, October 27. http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/681167/Shanghais-tormented-teens.aspx.

Petridou, Elia. 2001. “The Taste of Home.” In *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*, edited by Daniel Miller, 87–104. Oxford: Berg.

Pink, Sarah. 2009. *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media, and Representation in Research*. London: SAGE.

———. 2011. “Images, Senses, and Applications: Engaging Visual Anthropology.” *Visual Anthropology* 24 (5): 437–54.

Pittman, Lisa, and Diana Smit. 2012. *Expat Teens Talk*. N.p.: Summertime Publishing.

Ploch, Beatrice. 1995. “Eignen sich Mental Maps zur Erforschung des Stadtraumes? Möglichkeiten der Methode.” *Kea: Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 8: 23–41.

Pollock, David C., and Ruth E. Van Reken. 1999. *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds*. Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Pratt, Geraldine. 1992. “Commentary: Spatial Metaphors and Speaking Positions.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10 (3): 241–44.

Pries, Ludger, ed. 2001. *New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century*. Routledge Research in Transnationalism. London: Routledge.

Pütz, Robert. 2004. *Transkulturalität als Praxis: Unternehmer türkischer Herkunft in Berlin*. Bielefeld: transcript.

Rapport, Nigel. 2000. “The Narrative as Fieldwork Technique: Processual Ethnography for a World in Motion.” In *Constructing the Field : Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World*, edited by Vered Amit, 71–95. London: Routledge.

Rapport, Nigel, and Andrew Dawson, eds. 1998. *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*. Oxford: Berg.

Richter, Nina. 2011. *Third Culture Kids: Transkulturelle Kindheits- und Jungend-erfahrungen*. Marburg: Tectum-Verlag.

Robertson, George, Melinda Mash, Lisa Tickner, Jon Bird, Barry Curtis, and Tim Putnam, eds. 1994. *Travellers’ Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement*. London: Routledge.

Robinson, Jennifer. 2010. “Cities in a World of Cities: The Comparative Gesture.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35 (1): 1–23. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00982.x.

Rouse, Roger. 1992. “Making Sense of Settlement: Class Formation, Cultural Struggle, and Transnationalism Among Mexican Migrants in the United States.” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645 (1): 25–52.

Sande, Allan. 2002. “Intoxication and Rite of Passage to Adulthood in Norway.” *Contemporary Drug Problems* 29 (2): 277–303.
Sander, Marie. 2008. “Shanghai Expat! ‘Mitausgereiste Ehefrauen’ und ihr Shanghaier Alltag auf Zeit. Zwischen Ohnmacht und Kreativität im transnationalen sozialen Raum.” Master’s thesis, Bremen, Germany: University of Bremen.
———. 2014. “Shanghai Suburbia: Expatriate Teenagers’ Age-Specific Experiences of Gated Community Living.” *City, Culture, and Society*, September. doi:10.1016/j.ccs.2014.08.001.
Schoon, Sonia. 2007. *Shanghai XXL: Alltag und Identitätsfindung im Spannungsfeld extremer Urbanisierung*. Bielefeld: transcript.
Selmer, Jan, and Hon Lam. 2004. “‘Third-Culture Kids’ Future Business Expatriates?” *Personnel Review* 33 (4): 430–45.
Séror, Jérémie. 2005. “Computers and Qualitative Data Analysis: Paper, Pens, and Highlighters vs. Screen, Mouse, and Keyboard.” *TESOL Quaterly* 39 (2): 321–28.
Shore, Cris. 2002. “Introduction: Towards an Anthropology of Elites.” In *Elite Cultures: Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Cris Shore and Stephen Nugent, 1–21. London: Routledge.
Shore, Cris, and Stephen Nugent, eds. 2002. *Elite Cultures: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
Simmel, Georg. 1903. “Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben.” In *Die Großstadt: Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Städteausstellung*, edited by Theodor Petermann, 185–206. http://socio.ch/sim/sta03.htm.
Simone, Abdou Maliq. 2004. *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Skelton, Tracey. 2001. “Girls in the Club: Researching Working Class Girls’ Lives.” *Ethics, Place & Environment* 4 (2): 167–73. doi:10.1080/13668790125371.
Sklair, Leslie. [2001]2003. The Transnational Capitalist Class. Oxford: Blackwell.
Smetana, Judith G. 2010. *Adolescents, Families, and Social Development: How Teens Construct Their Worlds*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
Smith, Robert C. 2001. “Comparing Local-Level Swedish and Mexican Transnational Life: An Essay in Historical Retrieval.” In *New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century*, edited by Ludger Pries. London: Routledge.
Sparling, Georgia. 2010. “Where to Live in Shanghai: Neighbourhoods and Housing Options.” *Shanghai Family*, August.
Sporton, Deborah, Gill Valentine, and Katrine B. Nielsen. 2006. “Post Conflict Identities: Affiliations and Practices of Somali Asylum Seeker Children.” *Children’s Geographies* 4 (2): 203–17. doi:10.1080/14733280600807062.

Tanu, Danau. 2011. “Vignettes from Another Perspective: When Cultural Hierarchies Matter at an International School.” In *Writing Out of Limbo: International Childhoods, Global Nomads, and Third Culture Kids*, edited by Gene H. Bell-Villada, Nina Sichel, Faith Eidse, and Elaine Neill Orr, 220–31. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
Teo, Sin Yih. 2011. “‘The Moon Back Home Is Brighter’?: Return Migration and the Cultural Politics of Belonging.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (5): 805–20. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2011.559720.
Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1974. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Turner, Simon. 2008. “Studying the Tensions of Transnational Engagement: From the Nuclear Family to the World-Wide Web.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34 (7): 1049–56. doi:10.1080/13691830802230323.

Turner, Victor. [1969]2008. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Piscataway, NJ: Aldine Transaction.

Valentine, Gill. 2003. "Boundary Crossings: Transitions from Childhood to Adulthood." *Children's Geographies* 1 (1): 37–52.

Vanderstede, Wouter. 2011. "'Chilling' and 'Hopping' in the 'Teenage Space Network:' Explorations in Teenagers' Geographies in the City of Mechelen." *Children's Geographies* 9 (2): 167–84. doi:10.1080/14733285.2011.562379.

Van Gennep, Arnold. [1960]1992. *The Rites of Passage: A Classic Study of Cultural Celebrations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vertovec, Steven. 1997. "Three Meanings of 'Diaspora' Exemplified Among South Asian Religions." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6 (3): 277–99. doi:10.1353/dsp.1997.0010.

———. 2004. "Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation." *International Migration Review* 38 (3): 970–1001.

Walmsley, Emily. 2005. "Race, Place and Taste: Making Identities Through Sensory Experience in Ecuador." In The Senses: Special Issue of Etnofoor, 18.1:43–60. Münster: LIT.

Walsh, Katie. 2006a. "British Expatriate Belongings: Mobile Homes and Transnational Homing." *Home Cultures* 3 (2): 123–44.

———. 2006b. "'Dad Says I'm Tied to a Shooting Star!' Grounding (Research On) British Expatriate Belonging." *Area* 38 (3): 268–78.

———. 2008. "Travelling Together? Work, Intimacy, and Home Amongst British Expatriate Couples in Dubai." In *Gender and Family Among Transnational Professionals*, 63–84. New York: Routledge.

———. 2010. "Review of Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia, by Anne-Meike Fechter." *Cultural Geographies* 17 (1): 139–40.

———. 2011. "Migrant Masculinities and Domestic Space: British Home-Making Practices in Dubai." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36 (4): 516–29.

Walters, Kate A., and Faith P. Auton-Cuff. 2009. "A Story to Tell: The Identity Development of Women Growing up as Third Culture Kids." *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 12 (7): 755–72. doi:10.1080/13674670903029153.

Waters, Johanna L. 2005. "Transnational Family Strategies and Education in the Contemporary Chinese Diaspora." *Global Networks* 5 (4): 359–77.

———. 2007. "'Roundabout Routes and Sanctuary Schools:' The Role of Situated Educational Practices and Habitus in the Creation of Transnational Professionals." *Global Networks* 7 (4): 477–97.

Way, Niobe. 2004. "Intimacy, Desire, and Distrust in the Friendships of Adolescent Boys." In *Adolescent Boys: Exploring Diverse Cultures in Boyhood*, edited by Niobe Way and Judy Y. Chu, 167–196. New York: New York University Press.

Webster, Chris, Fulong Wu, and Yanjing Zhao. 2006. "China's Modern Gated Cities." In *Private Cities: Global and Local Perspectives*, edited by Georg Glasze, Chris Webster, and Klaus Frantz, 153–69. London: Routledge.

Weißköppel, Cordula. 2001. *Ausländer und Kartoffeldeutsche: Identitätsperformanz im Alltag einer ethnisch gemischten Realschulklasse*. Juventa-Materialien. Weinheim: Juventa.

Welsch, Wolfgang. 1995. "Transkulturalität. Zur veränderten Verfaßtheit heutiger Kulturen." *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 45 (1. Vj.): 39–44.

———. 1999. "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today." In *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, edited by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash, 194–213. London: SAGE.

Wessendorf, Susanne. 2007. "Who Do You Hang Out With? Peer Group Association and Cultural Assertion among Second-Generation Italians in Switzerland."

In *Jugend, Zugehörigkeit und Migration: Subjektpositionierung im Kontext von Jugendkultur, Ethnizitäts- und Geschlechterkonstruktionen*, edited by Christine Riegel and Thomas Geisen, 111–27. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Wildner, Kathrin. 1995. "'Picturing the City:' Themen und Methoden der Stadtethnologie." *Kea: Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 8: 1–21.

Willis, Katie, and Brenda Yeoh. 2002. "Gendering Transnational Communities: A Comparison of Singaporean and British Migrants in China." *Geoforum* 33 (4): 553–65.

Willis, Katie, Brenda Yeoh, and S.M.A.K. Fakhri. 2002. "Transnational Elites." *Geoforum* 33 (4): 505–7.

Willis, Katie, and Brenda S. A. Yeoh. 2008. "'Coming to China Changed My Life:' Gender Roles and Relations Among Single British Migrants." In *Gender and Family Among Transnational Professionals*, edited by Anne Coles and Anne-Meike Fechter, 211–32. New York: Routledge.

Willis, Paul E. 1990. *Common Culture: Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Winnicott, Donald W. 1971. *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock.

Wulff, Helena. 1995. "Introduction: Introducing Youth Culture in Its Own Right: The State of the Art and New Possibilities." In *Youth Cultures: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Vered Amit-Talai and Helena Wulff, 1–18. London: Routledge.

Yamato, Yoko, and Mark Bray. 2006. "Economic Development and the Market Place for Education: Dynamics of the International Schools Sector in Shanghai, China." *Journal of Research in International Education* 5 (1): 57–82. doi:10.1177/1475240906061864.

Yeoh, Brenda S. A., and Katie Willis. 2005. "Singaporean and British Transmigrants in China and the Cultural Politics of 'Contact Zones.'" *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (2): 269–85. doi:10.1080/1369183042000339927.

Zeiher, Helga. 2003. "Shaping Daily Life in Urban Environments." In *Children in the City: Home, Neighbourhood, and Community*, edited by Pia Monrad Christensen and Margaret O'Brien, 66–81. London: Routledge.

Zukin, Sharon. 2005. "Whose Culture? Whose City?" In *The Urban Sociology Reader*, 281–89. London: Routledge.

1

HEIDELBERG STUDIES ON TRANSCULTURALITY

PASSING THROUGH SHANGHAI examines how children experience international mobility. Focusing on a specific, yet diverse group of expatriate youths in contemporary Shanghai, the book investigates how children negotiate cultural identity when they are subject to the highly mobile and often privileged lifestyle associated with their parent's international careers. The ethnographic fieldwork that informs the book was carried out in Shanghai from 2010 to 2012 and studied expatriate teenagers' everyday practices, their life at an international school, their engagement with the city, their dreams and aspirations, as well as their questions of belonging. The book's ethnographic approach captures the "in-between" state of moving while growing up and explores teenage practices and positionings in this transitory situation. The teenagers' own perspectives and experiences of living in expatriate communities contribute to a larger view on the interdependence and contradictions between the aspired flexibility of twenty-first century identities and the rigidity of cultural divisions based on nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marie Sander is an anthropologist who completed her doctoral degree at Heidelberg University in 2013. She previously read Cultural Studies with a focus on Cultural Anthropology as well as English Studies at Bremen University and the University of Tours. Her general research interests include questions of identity, migration, urban culture, and youth.




ISBN 978-3-946054-03-0